

# THE CENTURY BIBLE

NEW EDITION

*Based on the Revised Standard Version*

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## Joshua, Judges and Ruth

*Edited by*

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## LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR	<i>Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages</i>
ANEP	<i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures</i> , ed. J. B. Pritchard, 1954
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament</i> , ed. J. B. Pritchard, 1950
ATD	<i>Das Alte Testament Deutsch</i>
AV	Authorized Version
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BAT	<i>Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments</i>
BJ	<i>Bible de Jérusalem</i> , ed. R. de Vaux
BJPES	<i>Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
BWANT	<i>Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament</i>
BZAW	<i>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
Camb.B	<i>Cambridge Bible</i>
Cent.B	<i>Century Bible</i>
EB	<i>Encyclopaedia Biblica</i> , ed. T. K. Cheyne and J. S. Black, 1899-1903
EVV	English Versions
F.und F.	<i>Forschungen und Fortschritte</i>
GK	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> , ed. E. Kautzsch (English Trans. G. W. Collins, revised, A. E. Cowley), 1898
GP	<i>Géographie de la Palestine</i> , F. M. Abel, I, 1933; II, 1938
HDB	<i>Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible</i>
Heb.	Hebrew
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IB	<i>Interpreter's Bible</i>
ICC	<i>International Critical Commentary</i>

IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JPOS	Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KS	A. Alt, <i>Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel</i> , I-III, 1953-59
LXX	Septuagint (LXX <sup>A</sup> Codex Alexandrinus; LXX <sup>B</sup> Codex Vaticanus; LXX <sup>C</sup> Codex Sinaiticus)
M.T.	Massoretic Text
NSI	G. A. Cooke, <i>A Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions</i> , 1903
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
PJB	Palästinajahrbuch des deutschen evangelischen Instituts für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes zu Jerusalem
R d'A	Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale
RCG	Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 1st ed. 1909-13, 2nd ed. 1927-32, 3rd ed. 1957-62
RHR	Revue de l'histoire des religions
RSV	Revised Standard Version
RV	Revised Version
SAT	Die Schriften des Alten Testaments in Auswahl, 2nd ed.
UH	H. Gunkel, 1920-5
UH	C. H. Gordon, <i>Ugaritic Handbook</i> , 1947
VT	Vetus Testamentum
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins



## ABBREVIATIONS OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

OLD TESTAMENT (*OT*)

Gen.	Jg.	1 Chr.	Ps.	Lam.	Ob.	Hag.
Exod.	Ru.	2 Chr.	Prov.	Ezek.	Jon.	Zech.
Lev.	1 Sam.	Ezr.	Ec.	Dan.	Mic.	Mal.
Num.	2 Sam.	Neh.	Ca.	Hos.	Nah.	
Dt.	1 Kg.	Est.	Isa.	Jl	Hab.	
Jos.	2 Kg.	Job	Jer.	Am.	Zeph.	

APOCRYPHA (*Apoc.*)

1 Esd.	Tob.	Ad. Est.	Sir.	S. 3 Ch.	Bel	1 Mac.
2 Esd.	Jdt.	Wis.	Bar.	Sus.	Man.	2 Mac.
			Ep. Jer.			

NEW TESTAMENT (*NT*)

Mt.	Ac.	Gal.	1 Th.	Tit.	1 Pet.	3 Jn
Mk	Rom.	Eph.	2 Th.	Phm.	2 Pet.	Jude
Lk.	1 C.	Phil.	1 Tim.	Heb.	1 Jn	Rev.
Jn	2 C.	Col.	2 Tim.	Jas	2 Jn	

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF JOSHUA AND JUDGES

### 1. PLACE IN THE CANON

The books of Joshua and Judges, so called after their respective protagonists, belong with Samuel and Kings in Jewish tradition to the Former Prophets. They are recognized as distinct from the Law, with which nevertheless Joshua is often associated in literary criticism. Their subject matter, too, is different. The Pentateuch, which Noth (*Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch*, 2nd ed., 1957, pp. 13ff.) considers apart from Deuteronomy, really the introduction to Joshua/Kings, is concerned with the genesis and growth of Israel to a religious confederacy expressed in the Covenant-sacrament, and elaborates on the salvation experience, the Exodus, which was the basis of Israel's common faith. In Deuteronomy the Drama of Salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*) is recalled in the context of the Covenant-sacrament (Dt. 26-28) in the literary framework of Moses' speech on the eve of the occupation of the Promised Land, recapitulating the history of the desert period and stating the legal content of the Covenant as the principles of the life of the historical Israel as the distinctive people of God. Joshua and Judges deal respectively with the two centuries of settlement in Palestine after the decisive penetration c. 1225 B.C., the former recounting the occupation of the Promised Land mainly from aetiological traditions associated with the amphictyonic shrine of Gilgal and the vicinity (chapters 2-11) and describing the sacrament of the Covenant (Jos. 23-24), which may well reflect the institution of the Israelite amphictyony. However, this is but the prelude to the sequel in Judges. Joshua states the grounds of God's claim to Israel's obedience, and emphasizes that his grace is conditional. In Judges local tribal traditions chiefly and hero-legends which reflect the fluctuations of the fortunes of the Israelite communities are used to illustrate the conditional nature of God's grace to Israel. Joshua, in its story of the occupation of the Promised Land and especially in its culmination in the Covenant-sacrament in chapter 24, of which chapter 23 is a reflection, resumes the theme of Dt. 27-28, and this is the introduction to the subject of



the living force of the Word of God in the history of Israel in Judges, Samuel and Kings. In classifying Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings as 'the Former Prophets', Jewish tradition clearly recognizes a self-contained theological work, which interprets the history of Israel from the settlement in the Promised Land to the Exile.

This work, like the Pentateuch a compilation of sources, differs entirely in its literary framework. Whereas the structure of the Pentateuch is the post-exilic Priestly redaction, that of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings is the Deuteronomic compilation from the end of the Monarchy with, we believe, a post-exilic redaction from the same circles. The redaction, especially in Jg. 20-21, naturally reflects conceptions familiar in contemporary Priestly circles, but in no sense is the influence of P strong in Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, and it is in fact confined to comparatively few and easily isolated glosses.

Joshua and Judges, then, are the first and second parts of a self-contained Deuteronomic history of Israel, which Noth first recognized (*Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 1943; 2nd ed., 1957). The stylistic characteristics of the Deuteronomic compiler are evident throughout in the redundant, repetitive, rhetorical style, where the same phraseology is used in the same subjects without any attempt at variation, and the impression is that the element of solemn admonition is being adapted from a familiar liturgy. Though large portions of the work are obviously from original sources, free from such Deuteronomic features, there is no doubt that it is the Deuteronomist who gives unity to the whole. This is more apparent from the punctuation of the history at significant crises by passages in Deuteronomic style, reviewing the past and adumbrating the future, duly emphasizing the problems from the standpoint of Deuteronomic theology. These may be either in narrative form, as the summary of Joshua's conquests (Jos. 12), the programme of the Book of Judges (Jg. 2.11-3.6) and the review of the tragic past of the Northern kingdom at its fall in 721 B.C. (2 Kg. 17.7ff.), or in speeches from the protagonists, e.g. of Yahweh to Joshua on the eve of the occupation (Jos. 1.2-9), the address of Joshua on the completion of the occupation, which anticipates the problems of the next phase in Judges (Jos. 23), the speech of Samuel, which marks the end of the

period of the judges (1 Sam. 12), and the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple (1 Kg. 8.14ff.).

The unity of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings with Deuteronomy as an introduction is further indicated by overlaps in subject-matter, indicating that certain of the books at least were not divided as now. 1 Kg. 1-2, for instance, continues the theme of the Davidic succession which occupies much of 2 Samuel, and the Philistine oppression, stated in Jg. 13.1 to have lasted 40 years, is still the theme of 1 Samuel, at least until Samuel's victory in 1 Sam. 7.10. Similarly, 45 years span the time between Joshua's reconnaissance of Canaan, visualised immediately after the Exodus, and his apportionment of the land, allowing 5 years for the conquest of the land east and west of Jordan. This impression of unity seems to be confirmed by the schematic chronology which is so marked a feature of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and the reigns of David and Solomon in the beginning of Kings. The statement that the Temple was begun in Solomon's fourth year, 480 years after the Exodus (1 Kg. 6.1), seems to have some connection with the periods of 40, 20, and 80 years which are characteristic of the chronology of Judges, and Noth has used this as an argument for the unity of these books in the Deuteronomic history according to the following chronological scheme (*Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 2nd ed., 1957, pp. 21-27):

The address and death of Moses 'in the 40th year' (sc. after the Exodus (Dt. 1.3)	40
The completion of the conquest under Joshua 45 years after his reconnaissance of Canaan, visualised as immediately after the Exodus (Jos. 14.10)	5
Eight years of oppression from which Othniel delivered the people (Jg. 3.8) and subsequently 40 years' rest	48
Eighteen years of Moabite oppression (Jg. 3.14) and 80 years' rest (Jg. 3.30)	98
Twenty years' oppression under Sisera (Jg. 4.3) and subsequently 40 years' rest (Jg. 5.31)	60
Seven years of Midianite oppression (Jg. 6.1) and subsequently 40 years' rest (Jg. 8.28)	47
Abimelech's 3-year reign (Jg. 9.22)	3



JOSHUA AND JUDGES	4
Tola as judge 23 years (Jg. 10.2)	23
Jair as judge 22 years (Jg. 10.3)	22
Eighteen years of Ammonite oppression (Jg. 10.8)	18
Jephthah as judge 6 years (Jg. 12.7)	6
Ibzan as judge 7 years (Jg. 12.9)	7
Elon as judge 10 years (Jg. 12.11)	10
Abdon as judge 8 years (Jg. 12.14)	8
Forty years Philistine oppression (Jg. 13.1), including the latter part of Eli's 40-year office (1 Sam. 4.18), Samson's leadership (Jg. 16.31) and Samuel's career until the elevation of Saul, or until his death (time unspecified)	40
Saul's reign of 2 years (1 Sam. 13.1)	2
David's reign of 40 years (1 Kg. 2.11)	40
The foundation of the Temple in Solomon's fourth year (1 Kg. 6.1), perhaps his first year coinciding with David's last (1 Kg. 1)	3
Total	480

Here we are not concerned with the historical probability of this chronology, which has obvious limitations, but only with its schematic character in the Deuteronomic historical work.

There are obviously awkward obstacles to Noth's scheme, as F. Nötscher, among recent commentators, has noted. There is the 40 years of Eli, which might coincide with the first half of the Philistine oppression and twenty years before that, but which Noth regards as a late insertion. To be sure, Eli has nothing in common either with the great or the minor judges. He is introduced abruptly and not, as the great judges, after the formula of Israel's sin and repentance and God's mercy, nor is his grave specifically mentioned as those of the minor judges, and his 40 years' office contrasts strikingly with the precise periods of the office of the minor judges. Thus Eli's 40 years of office may well be a Priestly interpolation. A more serious difficulty would seem to be the 2 years' reign of Saul, where textual corruption is generally assumed. S. R. Driver (*Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel*, 2nd ed., 1913, p. 97), in maintaining this view, notes that if 2 is intended that would normally be the noun 'year' in the dual, which makes it probable

that a number has dropped out before '2 years'. The plural of 'years', however, as Noth points out (op. cit., p. 25n.) still demands a unit before it and not a higher number. Even so, Saul's reign, whether 2 years or longer, is still a difficulty, and even if the grammatical abnormality could be admitted, the only sense that the notice might have is that it refers to the time Saul reigned after the death of Samuel.

The chronology of Judges and Samuel is admittedly full of complications, which is apparent from the many various attempts at explanation, none of which has so far commanded general assent. Burney (*The Book of Judges*, 1930, p. liv) proposed that the 480 years of 1 Kg. 6.1 comprised the active lifetime of the twelve major figures from the Exodus to the foundation of the Temple, namely Moses, Joshua, Othniel, Ehud, Barak with Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Eli, Samuel, Saul, and David. Subsequently, he supposed, Saul's reign was discounted because he was not considered legitimate by orthodox Jewish scribes, and in his place were put the minor judges, whose periods of office (excluding Jephthah) amount to 70 years. This would give a figure far in excess of the 480 years of 1 Kg. 6.1.

Budde (*Das Buch der Richter* (*Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament*, ed. K. Marti), 1897, p. xvii) noted that the periods attributed to the minor judges amount to 70 years (excluding Jephthah), or 73 years if Abimelech's reign is included. This, he observes, almost agrees with the periods of oppression in the account of the exploits of the great judges, which actually amounts to 71 years. He proposed, therefore, that the schematized chronology belongs to the stories of the great judges, which he admits as the primary stage of the Book of Judges, the notices on the minor judges, in his view, being secondary, and indeed from a post-Deuteronomic redactor, whom he designates Rp (op. cit., pp. ix, xvii-xviii).

Few would doubt that the notices of the minor judges are secondary in the Book of Judges, so ill-integrated are they with their context. That is not to say, however, that they do not contain genuine, ancient and reliable data. In fact it is just because of their reliability, indicated by the odd numbers, as distinct from the round



numbers in the case of the great judges, that they have caused so much difficulty. Now the total of 70 years for the offices of the minor judges is too short for the period between the main phase of the Hebrew penetration and the development of the sacral confederacy of Israel and the Monarchy, so the five minor judges were obviously taken selectively. Selection implies a purpose and a principle, and it may be that they were selected to be, with the great judges, as representative as possible of all sections of Israel. But it is also possible that in addition those judges were selected whose years of office most nearly amounted to the 71 years of oppression in the schematic chronology of the great judges. To be sure if we discount Abimelech's 3 years, since his story was selected for another purpose, there is a discrepancy of 1 year, which was as near to agreement as was possible, given the fact that in the notices of the minor judges a source was used with accurate data which did not admit free treatment. The odd numbers in the periods of oppression may also in part be based on firm records, perhaps from inscriptions on memorial stones, such as that which Mesha of Moab (fl. c. 830) set up with an inscription recording his successful war of liberation together with the notice that his land had been oppressed by the House of Omri 'forty years' (G. A. Cooke, *NSI* 1, l. 8). Thus the five minor judges may have been selected, as Budde thought, to fill the gap in the years of oppression. Now if the 70 years of the minor judges are deducted from the grand total of the chronological notes for the period between the Exodus and the fourth year of Solomon with the great and minor judges, the periods of oppression, the period assigned to Eli and David, with the unstated period of the authority of Joshua and Samuel, and on the assumption that Saul's reign of 2 years is a corruption, we come tolerably near, if not exactly, to the 480 years of 1 Kg. 6.1. There are still some 11 years too few, but that may be accounted for by the unspecified period of Samuel's office, by the real length of Saul's reign, or by the fact that the round numbers in the stories of the exploits of the great judges were never intended to be understood as other than approximations.

The problem of the numbers in Judges and its related parts of the Deuteronomic history is less one of chronology than of literary analysis. The compilation of the stories of the great judges would

have some chronological notices. The saga affinities of this work would indicate the round numbers with which we are familiar in that part of Judges, but in the notices of odd numbers in some of the periods of oppression we probably have a genuine historical tradition, as we have also in the notices of the minor judges. It is not certain when the notices of the minor judges were incorporated into the account of the exploits of the great judges. In view of the inclusion of Jephthah, however, who combined the office of judge or arbiter or expounder of the law with the calling of a deliverer, we see no reason why the other five great judges should not have been included relatively early before the Deuteronomic compilation. Since we cannot accurately determine the extent of the pre-Deuteronomic compilation of the call and saving exploits of the great judges, which we now know in its incorporation in the Deuteronomic history, we cannot determine its chronological scheme, if it had one. But the round numbers in this source probably suggested to the Deuteronomic compiler the chronological scheme which culminated in the round number 480 years of 1 Kg. 6.1. The Deuteronomist, however, was sufficiently faithful to his sources to let figures stand in the data that he took over, and it is probably with respect to what he had accepted as schematic chronology that he refrained from complicating the scheme by assigning specific periods of authority to Joshua and Samuel. The fact that the Deuteronomic historian does not assign specific periods of office to such great figures as Joshua and Samuel is perhaps the surest indication that he recognized a regular schematic chronology. The same fact probably prevented him from dating Saul, though here in the regular government of Israel we should expect a firm chronological note. The length of Saul's reign thus was left deliberately blank, to be filled in later by a late redactor, whose contribution, however, is lost through textual corruption.

## 2. DATE OF THE DEUTERONOMIC HISTORY

The question of the date of this great work is bound up with its unity. It has been held that it was a post-exilic work, a frank self-scrutiny imposed by the discipline of the Exile. On the other hand,



it is maintained that there was a pre-exilic compilation by the Deuteronomic circle about the end of the Monarchy, and a later redaction from the same circle after the Exile. This is suggested by the repeated statement of the abiding Divine covenant with the House of David in Samuel and Kings, which indicates a date before 586 B.C., and other references to the Exile and later events, which suggest a post-exilic redaction. The evidence of these two stages, though not of their respective dates, is even clearer in Joshua and Judges, especially in the two farewell addresses of Joshua (chapter 23, by the Deuteronomic compiler, and chapter 24 by the redactor, though using earlier material), and in the appendix on the outrage at Gibeah and its sequel (Jg. 20-21), which disrupts the pattern of the Deuteronomic compilation and, though based on older sources, is strongly impregnated with post-exilic language and theology. Such a major redaction and also minor Priestly adjustments, mainly quite obvious glosses, especially in Joshua, might be made the more readily since the Former Prophets did not become canonical Scripture till about the beginning of the 2nd century B.C.

### 3. THEOLOGY OF THE DEUTERONOMIC HISTORY

The theology of the work is straightforward, and is conveyed by the tradition which classified the work as 'the Former Prophets'. It is history as a commentary on the Word of God. 'God is not mocked'; he declared his will for Israel in the religious and moral principles communicated in the sacrament of the Covenant and endorsed by Israel with solemn adjuration (Dt. 27.15-26). These principles were developed in their practical application in Moses' address in Deuteronomy, and the consequences of obedience or apostasy elaborated in Dt. 28. The Deuteronomic history develops the theme of the operation of this Word in blessing and curse in the history of Israel in Palestine. Joshua, somewhat ideally, dwells on the theme of God's blessing in the triumphal establishment of Israel in the Promised Land while yet the strong hands of Moses and Joshua held her in the path of obedience; from Judges onwards the vicissitudes of Israel are cited as evidence of the operation of God's Word in judgment, tempered only by his mercy.

## 4. SOURCES

Though the work is conceived and executed as a whole, dominated by this single main theme, it is none the less a compilation from earlier sources, which are often used as the sources of the Pentateuch were used, i.e. in such a way that doublets and discrepancies often emerge. Under the influence of traditional Pentateuchal criticism, older critics since Wellhausen, e.g. Budde, Moore, H. W. Robinson and Burney, related these, particularly in Joshua, to the narrative sources J and E in the Pentateuch, and this is still done by Eissfeldt, with his refinement of an L and a J source in addition to the later E (*Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1934, pp. 288-301; 3rd ed., 1964, pp. 321-57), Rudolph ('Der "Elohist" von Exodus bis Josua', *BZAW* LXVIII, 1938), Pfeiffer (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed., 1952, pp. 295-337), Hölscher (*Geschichtsschreibung in Israel*, 1952, pp. 336-64), Weiser (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1961, pp. 144ff.), and C. A. Simpson (*The Early Traditions of Israel*, 1948, *Composition of the Book of Judges*, 1957). Simpson would distinguish in the account of the conquest from Num. 13.1 to Jg. 2.5 three main bodies of tradition, which crystallized in the literary sources J<sub>1</sub>, the Southern tradition (Eissfeldt's L source), and J<sub>2</sub> from the North, to which the Covenant tradition was proper, and which incorporated and developed J<sub>1</sub>. The two sources were then conflated by E, which introduced traditions from a northern group different from those whose traditions crystallized in J<sub>2</sub>. No analysis on those lines, however, has compelled general assent, and in Joshua, where evidence of the narrative sources of the Law is more generally claimed, critics are usually content to assign narrative portions, chiefly in the first half of the book, to JE without attempting further analysis. Modern criticism, however, since Noth's work (*Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 1st ed., 1943; 2nd ed., 1957, *Das Buch Josua*, 1937; 2nd ed., 1953) is less sure of the possibility of such analysis, a mood which is reflected by Bentzen (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, vol. 2, 1949, pp. 83, 90), who admits variant traditions or tradition-complexes, but is still doubtful of evidence for the documentary sources J and E in Judges. Our opinion is that the Deuteronomic historian in Joshua and Judges to a considerable extent drew on



traditions and tradition-complexes available also to J and E, some of which, especially in the first half of Joshua, had probably already been given literary form roughly simultaneously with J. The compilation of traditions in J and E might even have suggested the compilation of the local traditions of the penetration and settlement of Israel, especially those in Jos. 2-11 and the stories of the great judges. In Joshua, Noth has discerned the work of such a collector between the disruption of Solomon's kingdom and the death of Ahab (see below, pp. 21ff., 53), and in Judges W. Beyerlin ('Gattung und Herkunft des Rahmens im Richterbuch', *Tradition und Situation*, edited by E. Würthwein and O. Kaiser, 1963, pp. 1-29) has distinguished the framework of the stories of deliverance by the great charismatics within the pattern of apostasy, suffering, public penitence, appeal to God, God's mercy and deliverance through the Divinely called leader expressed in the liturgical convention of the Divine contention with his people, which had its context in the sacrament of the Covenant at the assembly of the sacral confederacy. W. Richter (*Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch*, 1963) also visualizes, like Beyerlin, such a pre-Deuteronomic literary work on the deliverances by the great judges. This most recent development of the critical study of Judges freely admits variant sources, but these are not explained on the hypothesis of the documentary sources of the Pentateuch J and E. The narrative complexes in Jos. 2-11 and Jg. 3.7-12.7, on the contrary, are compositions in their own rights no less than J and E in the Pentateuch, but with a quite different motivation. If Jos. 2-11 stands closer to J and E in its theme of the occupation of the Promised Land, its theme is more accentuated, and like the stories of the great judges it is dominated by the motif of the holy war. The stories of the great judges, however, are even more sharply differentiated from J and E by the undercurrent of criticism of the Monarchy in the context of the ideal of charismatic leadership of the judges in the days when the sacral confederacy of the tribes was really effective. This controversial aspect of the stories of the great judges is justly, in our opinion, emphasized by Richter (op. cit., pp. 336-39). Here, of course, the polemical character of the stories of the great judges may be given by the Deuteronomic compiler's careful selection and presentation of his sources, and this we consider

to be notably so in the story of Abimelech (Jg. 9). But the fact remains that the compiler had such matter to draw upon, and so clearly did it speak that it required the minimum of retouching by the Deuteronomic compiler.

In our analysis of sources in Joshua and Judges, while recognizing the pre-Deuteronomic compilations in Jos. 2-11 and Jg. 3.7-12.7, we shall attempt to determine rather the ultimate pre-literary source-traditions as far as these may be recovered, and must postpone more detailed discussion of these until the specific introduction to each book.

## 5. TEXT

The Massoretic, or traditional, text of Joshua and Judges, like the rest of the Old Testament, is attested fully vocalized in the Leningrad Codex of 1008, the basis of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* (3rd ed.), which is the basis of our study, and in the Aleppo Codex from the first half of the 10th century. This tradition of a vocalized text goes back to the middle of the first millennium A.D., before which only consonants were used, certain consonants being occasionally used for vowels in certain syllables to obviate ambiguity. The consonantal text was standardized by c. A.D. 100. Vowels, where not indicated by consonants, were supplied by the reader according to a generally well-established tradition, which is substantially that of the Aleppo and Leningrad Codices. The biblical manuscripts from Qumrān and its vicinity are, of course, of tremendous significance for the history of the text of the Old Testament in so far as they attest in extensive fragments practically all books of the Old Testament almost half a millennium before the great uncial manuscripts of the LXX and even, in the case of fragments of a manuscript of Samuel (4QSam), in the 3rd century B.C. (F. M. Cross, *BASOR* 132, 1953, pp. 15-26 *JBL* LXXIV, 1955, pp. 165-72). While it is significant that this text, and to a less extent later manuscripts from Qumrān, support LXX where it notably diverges from the standard Hebrew text, the bulk of the evidence indicates that, if the Hebrew text was not standardized by c. A.D. 100, there was at least a definite trend towards standardization. The few fragments of Judges from Qumrān (1Q) exhibit this tendency, though giving the following variants:



- Jg. 9.31 *šārîm* 'al *hā(-'îr)* ('they are besieging the city') for M.T. *šārîm* 'et-*hā(-'îr)*, where the difficulty of the particular verb with the direct object had suggested a conjectural emendation of *šārîm* to *m'-'îrîm* ('They are stirring up...').
- Jg. 9.40 *wayyird'pēm* ('and he pursued them') for M.T. *wayyird'pēhû* ('and he pursued him'),
- Jg. 9.42 *wayyaggēd* ('and he told') for M.T. *wayyaggîdû* ('and they told').

None of these, to be sure, affects seriously the general sense of the M.T. except the first, where the M.T. has prompted a conjectural emendation.

In passages in the traditional Hebrew text where the sense has broken down through obvious scribal corruption the clue to an earlier Hebrew text is found in the early versions, notably the Greek translation, the Septuagint (LXX), made in Alexandria between c. 250 (Law) and c. 190 B.C. (Prophets) and attested *in extenso* in the great uncial codices Sinaiticus (Σ) and Vaticanus (B) from the first part of the 4th century A.D. and in earlier fragments such as the John Rylands Papyrus of parts of Deuteronomy (c. 150 B.C.). Other Greek translations later attested than LXX are those of Aquila (c. A.D. 130), Symmachus (c. A.D. 170) and Theodotion (c. A.D. 200). The need for the Old Testament in the vernacular, which necessitated the LXX in Egypt, occasioned the Syriac translation (Peshitta) in North Mesopotamia, where the native royal family of the Aramaean kingdom of Adiabene became proselytes to Judaism in the middle of the 1st century A.D. First attested in the Codex Ambrosianus (6th or 7th centuries A.D.), its first origins may go back as far as the 1st century A.D. The value of this version, especially where it diverges from the LXX, is that Syriac is a cognate Semitic language with Hebrew, and might reasonably be supposed to be more sensitive to the idiom and ethos of the Semitic original. Related to the LXX, but a translation of the Hebrew, is the Vulgate, made by Jerome between A.D. 390 and 405, which has a peculiar value in that Jerome lived and worked in Bethlehem and so was familiar with local customs and topography.

In restoring the Hebrew text in the light of variant readings in the

versions we must test the feasibility of such variants in the context, reckoning with scribal corruption. We must not limit our study of the Hebrew text to that in the script familiar in the manuscripts, but visualize it in its various stages of palaeographic development attested increasingly fully in inscriptions of various length from archaeological stations and from the whole period during which the books of the Old Testament were written and transmitted. In restoring the picture of the ancient Near East, archaeology, even in its more material aspect, has made its contribution to textual criticism, and even more so in the ancient literature to which it has introduced us. Many words in the Old Testament, occurring only once and on that account suspect and often misunderstood or corrupted, are now elucidated in those other literatures, Akkadian and Canaanite, where their cognates occur more often and in contexts which fix their meaning beyond doubt. The recovery of these literatures, notably the Canaanite literature of Rās Shamra, has stimulated a new interest even in Semitic languages so well known as Arabic, and has opened the way for new insights into the nuances of words and phrases in cognate Semitic languages.



INTRODUCTION TO  
THE BOOK OF

JOSHUA

# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

## 1. CONTENTS

The Book of Joshua, so called after its chief character whose work it describes and in whose death it culminates, falls into three sections:

FIRST SECTION. **1-12.** NARRATIVES OF THE CONQUEST introduced by the Divine exhortation to Joshua (1.2-9, Deuteronomic) and terminated by a summary of his conquests (chapter 12, Deuteronomic).

SECOND SECTION. **13-21.** APPORTIONMENT OF THE LAND to the tribes (13.1-19.51), appointment of cities of refuge (chapter 20) and Levitical settlements (21.1-42), and summary note on the conclusion of the occupation of the Promised Land (21.43-45, Deuteronomic).

THIRD SECTION. **22-24.** CONCLUSION: the dismissal of the Transjordan tribes to their homes (22.1-9), the controversy on the altar in the Jordan Valley (22.10-34), the farewell addresses of Joshua in the context of the sacrament of the Covenant at Shechem (chapter 23, the original conclusion by the Deuteronomic compiler, and chapter 24, an elaboration by the Deuteronomic redactor (see above, p. 8), summarizing the general historical theme of the Law, but reflecting the ancient tradition of the sacrament of the Covenant at the central shrine at Shechem).

## 2. RELATION OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA TO THE LAW

The subject of the Book of Joshua is the culmination of the Drama of Salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*) with the occupation of the Promised Land and the fulfilment of Moses' mission through Joshua, as is emphasized in chapter 1 and again in Joshua's farewell addresses (chapters 23, 24). The subject is thus connected with that of the Law, where the promise of the land and the status of a people is the theme of the patriarchal narratives (Gen. 12.2; 13.14-17, etc.). Accordingly, until quite recently critics since Wellhausen (*Die Composition des Hexateuchs*, 2nd ed., 1889, pp. 118ff.) have included Joshua in the 'Hexateuch' (see above, p. 9). The traditional Jewish division

of the Canon, however, includes Joshua in the Former Prophets, and Wellhausen himself, though speaking of the 'Hexateuch', was well aware of the distinctive character of the Book of Joshua, which he regarded rather as an appendix to the Pentateuch, treating different material in a different way (op. cit., p. 116). The question of the relation of Joshua to the Law is not easy to resolve. To dissociate it, as Jewish tradition does, seems to be to deprive the historical theme in the Law of its natural conclusion, but the fact remains that while the framework of the Law from Genesis to Numbers is Priestly, that of Joshua, like Judges, Samuel and Kings is Deuteronomic. The same applies to the Book of Deuteronomy, which is properly the introduction to the Deuteronomic history of Israel from Joshua to Kings (see above, pp. 1ff.), a relationship appreciated by H. W. Robinson (*Cent. B.*, 1907, p. 251), who states, 'The Book of Deuteronomy is a sermon: the Book of Joshua is the preacher's illustrations collected into an appendix . . .'. Joshua, however, is not an appendix to the Pentateuch, but the beginning of a new history of Israel, the prelude of which is Deuteronomy. Though Robinson rightly emphasized the legal part of Deuteronomy, the principles of which coloured the presentation of events in Joshua, we should lay greater stress on the word of God in blessing and curse in the context of the sacrament of the Covenant in Dt. 26-28, the operation of which, in the chequered history of Israel, is properly the subject of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. This prefatory character of Joshua is clearly indicated by the introduction (1.2-9) and the conclusion to the Deuteronomic compilation of Joshua (chapter 23).

The unity of subject in the Law and Joshua is more apparent than real. The central theme of the Law is the Covenant, with its ritual and moral implications and its historical prelude in the grace and power of God as the basis of his absolute claim on Israel. In this context the occupation of the land was originally independent of the main theme of the Law, as Von Rad has contended ('Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuch', *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, 1958, pp. 48ff.), the former being associated with Gilgal and the latter with Shechem. With the shifting of the amphictyonic centre from Shechem to Gilgal the two themes were naturally fused, the more so in that the occupation of the Promised Land would not



fail to be acknowledged with the Great Deliverance (the Exodus) in the historical preamble to the Covenant formula (see below, pp. 32ff.) as the basis of God's sovereign claim to Israel's allegiance (cf. the short historical Credo, Dt. 26.5-9). In the narrative sources of the Law, however, the theme of occupation of the Promised Land remained secondary to that of the Exodus-Covenant tradition; in Joshua it is the primary theme. Here Joshua treats a theme which is common to the Law and draws on a source on which J and E also drew, the cult-tradition of Gilgal, but community of source does not prove that either J or E in their literary form were sources of the account of the occupation in the first half of Joshua, and this has never been convincingly demonstrated.

Nor does the summary of the historical prelude to the Law in Jos. 24 demonstrate the use of these main sources of the Law in Joshua. To say nothing of the fact that this is a redactional appendix and not part of the original Deuteronomic compilation, it reflects neither J nor E distinctively, but rather the composite Law in the Priestly redaction, which alone gives the family of Terah (cf. Jos. 24,2). Accordingly we shall attempt to determine the ultimate origin, nature and *Sitz im Leben* of sources without prejudice as to their character as literary documents, treating the subject according to the main sections.

### 3. SOURCES AND COMPOSITION

On critical consideration of Jos. 1-12 it is apparent that the account of the occupation which it purports to give is very uneven and inadequate. There is nothing comparable with the detail of events about Gilgal in chapters 2-8, and though the passages on the campaigns about Gibeon (10.9ff.) and Hazor (11.1-9) and the covenant at Shechem (8.30-35) all probably rest on some historical basis, it must be admitted that a narrative of the occupation which omits the conquest of the whole of central Palestine is inadequate. The limited success of Israel's occupation, their sporadic, piecemeal, local penetration is borne out by Jg. 1 and Jos. 15.63, 16.10 and 17.12, and is, we think, the probable explanation of the fact that the theme of the *Heilsgeschichte* in the narrative sources of the Law never

culminated in an account of the occupation of the Promised Land. This remained simply an ideal, expressed generally in cult-legend and developed by the collector of traditions of the settlement in Jos. 2-11 in the theme of the holy war, under which the stories of the great judges are given unity in a similar work in Jg. 3.7-12.7. The real historical sources of the settlement are the originally independent tribal traditions in Judges, of which much of the tradition of Benjamin underlies Jos. 2-8, with possibly part of the tradition of Judah in the narrative of the stoning of Achan (7.1, 16-26), of Ephraim in the tradition of the battle of Gibeon (10.9-11), of Joseph in one of the variants of the destruction of Ai in chapter 8, and of Naphtali in the campaign by the Waters of Merom (11.1-9). The bulk of this matter (chapters 2-8) is located about, or on the way to, Gilgal by Jericho, which was the central shrine of all Israel in the days of Saul (1 Sam. 10.8, 11. 14, 15, 13.4, 7, 15.12, 21, 33), and was a centre of pilgrimage still in the time of Amos (4.4, 5.5) and Hosea (4.15, 9.15, 12.11). Here, at the point where Benjamin, and possibly Joseph, penetrated Palestine, the theme of the cult-legend was the occupation of the Promised Land. This was no doubt primarily based on the historical traditions of Benjamin and possibly Gad and Reuben, who thus realized their solidarity at this shrine, which was really a boundary shrine, though strictly in Benjamin, before it became a sanctuary of all Israel. Thus we might expect that a narrative of the occupation based on the cult-legend of Gilgal reflects in details the Benjaminite tradition of the occupation.

There is another explanation of the local details of the tradition of the occupation in this locality, which, however, need not exclude that just suggested. A pronounced feature of Jos. 2-8 is the interest in topical features, stones, ruins, a Canaanite house or family in derelict Jericho, the Hill of Foreskins, etc. The reason (Greek *aitia*) for these is adduced from the traditions of the occupation. Hence such matter is termed aetiological tradition. The connection between local features and local history, which is often quite fanciful and uncritical, is a commonplace of folklore and was no doubt part of the tribal tradition of Benjamin and their immediate neighbours in Judah and Ephraim. But this interest was also natural to pilgrims visiting a central shrine, and the particularization of the theme of the cult-



legend of the occupation at the shrine of Gilgal by such local details might well have been effected by the local priests to sustain the faith of the pilgrims and to enhance the prestige of the shrine. The unfailing location of incidents in the life of our Lord by the Christian Church for the gratification of pilgrims is immediately suggested. The two stages in the history of Gilgal, first as the boundary shrine of the tribes of Benjamin and the Transjordan tribes of Gad and Reuben in the early history of the latter when it had its associations about Jericho, west of the Jordan (see below, pp. 49, 51, 141), and later as the central shrine of all Israel, might account for the doublets and variants which are notable features in these traditions. A further source of variation was possibly the traditions of Joseph, who probably penetrated by the same way, as Jg. 1.22-26 may suggest. Local topographical tradition and the interest of pilgrims to the central sanctuary contribute to the complexity of the tradition about Gilgal. The situation is further complicated by later hands, by the first literary compiler of Jos. 2-8 (see next paragraph), and certainly by the Deuteronomic compiler of the Book of Joshua with Judges, Samuel and Kings, to say nothing of later redactional elaboration of Priestly sympathies before the whole was accepted as canonical Scripture c. 200 B.C., when it admitted no further amendment. These variants are most marked in the passage on the crossing of the Jordan (chapters 3-4).

Most of these traditions were originally independent, but their interrelation through their connection with the tradition of the occupation of the Promised Land would be naturally suggested by their association with Gilgal, particularly after its development as an amphictyonic shrine of all Israel after Shechem towards the end of the period of the Judges (see on 22.9-34). It is not possible to tell whether this Gilgal tradition-complex had a literary form, but in its combination with the Ephraimite-Benjaminite tradition of the battle of Gibeon and the sequel, and with the tradition of the campaign at the Waters of Merom, the evidence of literary compilation emerges. The themes of these separate local traditions are artificially drawn together by editorial notes, e.g. 'when . . . the kings of the Amorites . . . and . . . the kings of the Canaanites . . . heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan' (5.1); 'so the Lord was with Joshua; and his fame



was in all the land' (after the fall of Jericho) (6.27); 'when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai' (9.3-4); 'when Adonizedek . . . heard how Joshua had taken Ai . . . and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace . . .' (10.1). The campaign against Hazor is similarly introduced (11.1). Noth would include with these the summary of Joshua's conquests in the South (10.40-42) and in the whole country (11.16-20) (*Das Buch Josua*, 1953, pp. 12-13), but in our opinion those summaries have been very much elaborated by the Deuteronomic compiler. It might be thought that the linking passages just cited were also of the Deuteronomic compilation, but the style and language does not suggest the Deuteronomist, and the most feasible conclusion is that of Noth (op. cit., p. 13), that this is evidence of the work of one who collected and combined those traditions ('*der Sammler*'), subsuming them under the theme of the conquest of the Promised Land and under the figure of Joshua, who, however, may have already been associated in Benjaminite and Ephraimite tradition with the battle of Gibeon (see below, pp. 43ff.) and possibly also with the foundation of the sacral confederacy of Israel at Shechem (see on 8.30-35 and pp. 36, 45f.). The date of this literary compilation, according to Noth's feasible reckoning (op. cit., p. 13), was in the early Monarchy. The ruin of Hazor, which was rebuilt under Solomon (1 Kg. 9.15), is a living memory, but nothing is known of the rebuilding of Jericho (6.26), under Ahab (874-853 B.C.) according to 1 Kg. 16.34. The reference to 'the hill-country of Israel' (11.16) obviously reflects a date after the Disruption of the kingdom, so that this work may be dated at the outside limits between 931 and 853 B.C. The reference to 'the hill-country of Israel' and the detail in the traditions of the South in comparison with the few and rather vague references to details in the occupation of the North, where only the assembly at Shechem (8.30-35) and the campaign at the Waters of Merom (11.1-9) are mentioned, indicate an origin in Judah, probably in Jerusalem. If the J source of the Law was produced in Jerusalem at the court of Solomon, as it may well have been, this literary assembling of local traditions may have received its impetus from the work of J, and may, in fact, have been conceived as a supplement to J. This was the first block of tradition incorporated by the compiler of the

Deuteronomic history, the occupation of the Promised Land, which he introduces by the Divine command to Joshua (1.2-9) and Joshua's summons to the Transjordanian tribes (1.12-18), by which the connection with the narrative in Deuteronomy is effected (cf. Dt. 3.18-20), and concludes with the list of conquered kings in 12.1-24. Continuing the theme of Dt. (chapters 27ff.), the Deuteronomic compiler describes the assembly at Shechem (8.30-35), though in this case he may have adapted an actual historical tradition of the founding of the Israelite confederacy in the Covenant-sacrament, incorporating the new, militant settlers with their older kindred, in which Joshua may have been instrumental (see *ad loc.*). Such were the materials for the Deuteronomic compilation in Jos. 1-12, where the compiler's adjustments are not difficult to detect. But since this work was not canonical Scripture for practically half a millennium, other adjustments and glosses to the text were made, particularly reflecting the doctrinal susceptibilities of the Priestly school. These, however, are comparatively few and rather obvious and will be noted in the Commentary.

The second part of Joshua (chapters 13-21) deals with the apportionment of the land, and, being largely geographical lists, differs in character from the narrative of chapters 1-12, a difference which goes back to the respective sources. The matter is three-fold, concerning tribal territories (14.1-19.49a), prefaced by a recapitulation of the land of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh (13.8-33) from Num. 32.34ff. and concluded by a note on the inheritance of Joshua (19.49b-50), a list of cities of refuge (chapter 20), and of Levitical settlements (21.1-42).

In the list of tribal territories the heading 'these are the inheritances which the people of Israel received . . . which Eleazar . . . and Joshua . . . distributed to them' (14.1a) and the conclusion 'So they finished dividing the land . . .' (19.51) mean just what they say. This section is pragmatic, as distinct from the preceding, where the dominating view is that of the pre-Deuteronomic compiler, who renders the cultic theme of the occupation of the Promised Land by God's invincible agency. This theme of the guidance and agency of God is hardly conserved in the section on the apportionment of the land even by the adventitious conventions of the apportionment by lot



at the shrine by Joshua and the priest Eleazar, and the actual sources of the section are factual descriptions of tribal boundaries supplemented by administrative town-lists. There are also traditions of the independent settlement of certain groups, such as the Kenizzites under Caleb and Othniel, who were affiliated to Judah, and the expansion of Joseph, which are conserved in certain narrative passages and which are quite exceptional in this section (e.g. 14.6-15, 15.13-19, cf. Jg. 1.10, Jos. 15.15-19=Jg. 1.11-15, Jos. 17.14-18). The ultimate source of these is the same historical traditions of independent tribal initiative as emerge in Jg. 1. The association of these genuine narrative traditions with the boundary descriptions reflects on the authority and antiquity of the latter.

This section has generally been assigned to P. Eissfeldt (*Einleitung* . . ., 3rd ed., p. 335) still emphasizes the analogy of a similar, ideal, division in Ezekiel's reconstruction of the new Israel (Ezek. 48.1-29). But the analogy is superficial, and Ezekiel's division shows none of the odd projections and indentations (e.g. Jos. 15.5, 16.7), which give the tribal boundaries in Joshua the stamp of originality (Alt, 'Das System der Stammesgrenzen im Buche Josua', *KS I*, 1953, p. 196). Alt has observed that if these lists had been the artificial reconstruction of a redactor they would have conformed to the twelve-tribe system assumed by the redactor. On the contrary, the omission of boundaries for Simeon, Dan, and Issachar indicates that the compiler here was using older material conditioned by the actual historical situation (op. cit., p. 194). With the Galilean territories too he must have been working with older, though deficient, material, otherwise those areas would have been treated like the others had he been applying his own artificial scheme. Here, however, instead of the description of the boundaries followed by town-lists, town-lists and boundary points are generally not distinguished, and in the case of Issachar there is no systematic description of the boundary at all. Obviously the compiler was limited by his sources. The acceptance of old tribal divisions too in the fiscal organization of Solomon's administration (1 Kg. 4.7-19), though these are considerably modified, corroborates the view that the matter in Jos. 13-19 rests on a genuine historical tradition. Alt further feasibly contends that the separation of the fortified settlements of Tappuah (17.8) and



Jerusalem (15. 8) from their arable lands is quite inconceivable after the Hebrew monarchy, and must refer to the resistance and eventual fall of the city-states in the time of the Hebrew penetration and settlement (op. cit., p. 200).

This source of tribal boundaries may well rest on more than well-established oral tradition. The occasionally meticulous detail may indicate written sources, relating to the record of arbitration in tribal disputes over water (cf. the matter of the upper and lower basins between Caleb and Othniel), responsibility for crime, which was settled by proximity to settlements (cf. Dt. 21.1-8), and claims to Canaanite lands, which came before the tribal assembly and its official arbitrator. This may have been the role of the historical Joshua, the actual source of the tradition of his authority in all Israel, which was secondarily developed by the pre-Deuteronomic compiler in chapters 2-12 as his leadership in war. Von Rad also regards the tribal boundaries as the subject of claim and argument at the amphictyonic sanctuaries, which were confirmed after David's conquests and incorporation of the Canaanite centres in the land ('Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuch', *Gesammelte Studien*, pp. 79-80). This is probably the source of the very much overworked passage on the allotment by Joshua at Shiloh. Here the repeated reference to the recording of the findings of the territorial commissioners may indicate the documentary sources available to the compiler.

Alt goes on to emphasize discrepancies in the description of those tribal territories and the list of towns named in each, which has led him to the conclusion that, though the description of the tribal territories by boundary points was genuinely old, and possibly a feature of the period of the judges, the towns are generally enumerated from administrative lists of towns in the Monarchy. The fact that settlements in Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, and Dan in the tribe's original settlement in the South are fully listed in contrast to the incomplete list of Galilean settlements, and that there is no town-list at all for the territory of the Joseph tribes suggests the period of Josiah in his extension of the realm in the last decade before the collapse of Assyria in 612 B.C., while the North was still organized as Assyrian provinces. While official documents of Josiah's time were

doubtless used, especially in the districts claimed for Judah in the Philistine plain and immediately north of Jerusalem, new evidence of the wilderness settlements of Middin, Secacah, Nibshan and the City of Salt, which have been identified in the vicinity of Qumrān, and Engedi (9th–7th centuries B.C.), may suggest that for this district at least official records of the reign of Jehoshaphat (871–847 B.C.) may have been used (F. M. Cross and G. E. Wright, 'The Boundary and Province Lists of the Kingdom of Judah', *JBL* LXXV, 1956, pp. 202–26, see below, p. 128). While this archaeological evidence does not exclude Alt's dating of the source as an administrative list in the time of Josiah, the date of Cross and Wright at this point is the more probable. In any case a date before c. 900 B.C. or after c. 600 B.C. is excluded, and with it the P authorship of the section.

The literary history of chapters 20 and 21 is rather more complicated. In chapter 20 the prescription of cities of refuge in the event of unpremeditated homicide (verses 1–6, 9) immediately suggests a connection with Num. 35.9–34 (P), which prescribes three cities east and three west of Jordan, though not naming them; with Dt. 4.41–43, where three cities are appointed for this purpose in Transjordan, namely Beser, Ramoth Gilead and Golan; and with Dt. 19.1–13, where three cities (unnamed) are to be set apart for this purpose in three districts (also unnamed) west of the Jordan, and another three in a region unspecified, where the elders are to guarantee sanctuary, or in the case of a murderer, to hand the guilty party over to the avenger of blood. In Jos. 20.7–8 the regions and cities both east and west of the Jordan are specified. The four passages have been influenced in transmission one by the other. Dt. 4.41–43, unconnected with the context and naming the three cities in Transjordan which are unnamed in Dt. 19.1–13, is an interpolation suggested by Jos. 20.8. The omission of verses 4–5, 6 except 'until he stand before the congregation for judgment' from LXX suggests that this is a later expansion, and the mention of the term of office of the high priest indicates the influence of Num. 35.9–34 in the post-exilic redaction of Joshua. The fact that Dt. 19.7–9 mentions six cities indicates, according to de Vaux (*Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, 1961, p. 162), familiarity with the tradition in

Jos. 20, though the specification of cities in Transjordan was unrealistic in the time of the compilation of Deuteronomy, when the extension of Jewish influence to this area was at the best merely a prospect. De Vaux argues that since the organization was not on a tribal but a regional basis this indicates a date not before the time of Solomon, in whose administrative division of the kingdom tribal boundaries were not strictly followed. This, we think, does not follow. The regional modification seems to us rather to be designed to avoid intertribal complications within the amphictyony, which might easily have been disrupted by any tribe which had provided asylum and felt its honour to be touched if the refugee were given up. This is still a matter of some delicacy among Arab tribes. In essence then, the compiler of Joshua has preserved a genuine old tradition, though this has received redactional retouching, reflecting the passages already cited, to which 'of which I spoke to you through Moses' (verse 2) probably refers. The note on the tribal location of the three cities of refuge in Transjordan (verse 8) is probably, as Noth suggests (*op. cit.*, p. 125), by the redactor, who misunderstood the significance of Naphtali, Ephraim and Judah in verse 7, which, though tribal names, were probably earlier, as here, geographical terms (see Commentary *ad. loc.*).

The list of settlements for Levites according to the prescription of Num. 35.1-8 (P) was also taken by the older critics as an unrealistic reconstruction reflecting the Priestly interest of the post-exilic redactor. This view, when critically considered, raises more problems than it solves. The Levitical settlement in Hebron and the South has no relevance in the post-exilic period, when that region was occupied by the Edomites, as Yehezkel Kaufmann observes (*The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Palestine*, 1953, p. 41). Generally the area covered is much more extensive than that occupied by the Jews in the post-exilic period, except briefly in the time of Judas the Maccabee, as W. Rudolph observes (*Chronikbücher*, 1955, p. 179), and under Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.), by which time the references to the system in the Law (Num. 35.1-8) and the lists in Joshua were crystallized in Holy Scripture. This applies particularly to the Levitical settlements in Transjordan, such as Golan and Ashtaroth (Be-eshterah of Jos. 21), which were lost to Damascus



after c. 900 B.C. and recovered only temporarily under Jeroboam II, and the region north-east of the Dead Sea, where such settlements as Heshbon and Jazer (verse 39) passed out of Israelite hands certainly by c. 830 B.C. This militates also against Alt's view that the list relates to Josiah's removal of provincial Levites to Jerusalem (2 Kg. 23.8) ('Bemerkungen zu einigen judäischen Ortslisten', *KS II*, 1953, pp. 297ff.), or his later view that it relates to the resettlement of Levites in the vicinity of places in Judah which Josiah refortified in his re-organization of the realm after the curtailment of the kingdom of Hezekiah by Sennacherib ('Festungen und Levitenorte im Lande Juda', *KS II*, 1953, pp. 310-15). Noth regards the settlement as post-exilic. He suggests that the fact that in Num. 35.6, 7 the Samaritan Pentateuch shows a knowledge of Jos. 21 indicates that Jos. 21, even though post-exilic, cannot post-date the Samaritan schism, though the omission of certain districts in central Palestine suggests, he submits, a time when there was already tension between the Jews and their neighbours in the district of Samaria (*op. cit.*, p. 131). This view strangely ignores the inclusion of Shechem, the very metropolis of the Samaritans, in the list of Levitical settlements. Noth would explain the omission of Jerusalem and regions in the neighbourhood on the grounds that the passage is really interested in Levitical settlements in the Diaspora. But Noth clearly feels uneasy about this explanation, and the obvious objection to this view is that Levitical settlements so near Jerusalem as Gibeon, Geba and Anathoth (verses 17-18) are mentioned. Noth's strongest argument for a post-exilic date is the organization of the Levites by the families of Kohath, Gershon and Merari, which is unknown to the Chronicler in Ezr. 2.40=Neh. 7.43 (but cf. 1 Chr. 6.1), though accepted in P. This, however, may be a redactional adjustment to a list which, we think, goes back much earlier.

Against the apparent sense of Joshua and Num. 35.1-8 that the Levitical settlement was an ideal from the time of the occupation, even though 'an ancient Priestly utopia' (Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, p. 44), the obvious objection is that when particular localities, many quite obscure, are selected it is natural to relate the lists to periods when they were actually under Israelite control and had been actually settled by Levites. So the inclusion of places such as Gibbethon,

Elteke and Gath-rimmon (verses 23-24), all west of Gezer, must reflect a time at the earliest after Gezer had passed into Solomon's possession by the gift of the Pharaoh, and indeed the list includes many cities which, according to the realistic statement of Jg. 1, remained Canaanite enclaves after the main phase of Israelite penetration in Palestine. Apart from the confirmation of archaeology, which is considerable at such sites as Beth-shemesh and Tell Jerisheh (Gath-rimmon, according to Mazar), there is enough to suggest to critical scholarship that these lists, like the town-lists in Jos. 13-19, reflect conditions of the Monarchy, and possibly rest on official lists. Alt, as we have seen, proposed the reign of Josiah. Albright (*Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 1953, pp. 123ff.), on the other hand, after S. Klein, contends for a Davidic date, which the evidence of the text, topography and archaeology seems rather to support. This view had already been advanced by M. Löhr (*Das Asylwesen im Alten Testament*, 1930).

Albright made an important advance in demonstrating by the use of the LXX that Jos. 21 was a variant of the same tradition as in 1 Chr. 6.54ff. (M.T. 39ff.), arguing that both go back to records of David's administration.

B. Mazar goes further and proposes that the section is based on an official document from the archives of the Jerusalem priesthood ('The Cities of the Priests and the Levites', *VT Supplement VII*, Congress Vol., 1960, pp. 193-205). He dates the Levitical settlement specifically in the end of David's reign, when Solomon was co-regent, citing 1 Chr. 26.30-32, which refers to the installation of Levites of Hebron in office throughout the realm in the fortieth year of David, the town of Jazer being specifically mentioned as a Levitical centre in South Transjordan both in Jos. 21.39 and 1 Chr. 26.31. The statement that the Levites were 'in royal service' (1 Chr. 26.30) is highly significant, since it is not likely that this would have been stated in a post-exilic reconstruction. Mazar emphasizes the pre-eminence of the Kohathite family of Hebron in the Levitical settlement. Hebron was the first centre to acclaim David as king, and Mazar regards the Levites of Hebron as his loyal supporters. 1 Chr. 26.31, however, suggests that the Levitical settlement had already been made before the fortieth year of David, when a certain

Levitical family of Hebron origin already settled at Jazer in Transjordan was selected for a new Levitical settlement, doubtless connected with the constitutional innovation of the dynastic succession under Solomon. We suggest that the intensive settlement of Levites in Hebron and the Kenizzite district to the south and east of Hebron (Jos. 21.11, 13, 14) may rather represent measures taken by David after the suppression of Absalom's revolt, which had been organized from Hebron (2 Sam. 15.10). Mazar goes on most plausibly to demonstrate that the Levites were settled in border areas in the west of the Shephelah (Jos. 21.13-16) and in Transjordan (verses 27, 36-39) and in Canaanite enclaves recently annexed in the coastal and central plains (verses 23-25, 28-35). There their role was defensive, but Mazar plausibly suggests that, as 1 Chr. 26.30 indicates, it was also fiscal, to collect revenues and to administer royal estates, which now passed from the feudal chiefs of the Canaanite cities (cf. the feudalism in the administrative texts from Rās Shamra) to David and Solomon. Mazar further particularizes, arguing that the mention of Gibbethon as a Levitical settlement must predate the two years' reign of Nadab, the son of Jeroboam I, when it belonged to the Philistines (1 Kg. 15.27); and indeed the settlement of Elteke, Gibbethon, and Gath-Rimmon on the north frontier of Philistine territory (verses 23-24), if for strategic purposes, as the association with Aijalon (verse 24) and Libnah (verse 13) suggests, would be quite pointless except in the early Monarchy. The same conclusion follows from the mention of the settlements in Moab and North Transjordan, which were lost irrevocably to Moab and Damascus within fifty years of the death of Solomon, and Mahanaim in Gilead, which disappears from the records after its destruction by Sheshonk (Mazar, 'The Campaign of Pharaoh Shishak to Palestine', *VT*, Supplement IV, Congress Vol., 1957, p. 63).

The remarkable lacuna in the Levitical settlements in the hill-country of Ephraim and Manasseh and about Jerusalem was singled out by Noth as an outstanding problem, and Mazar feasibly suggests that this was in deference to the strong tribal tradition and sense of Israelite solidarity in Joseph, and also, we may add, to the absence of Canaanite elements in those hill-settlements except at Shechem, where there was a Levitical settlement (verse 21). A further reason for



the settlement at Shechem may have been to safeguard the Davidic interests at this old amphictyonic shrine, which had close associations with Manasseh and Ephraim, recently in the time of Samuel the leading tribe in Israel. In Judah, too, between Hebron and Jerusalem there were no Levitical settlements. In the restricted territory of Benjamin, however, immediately north of Jerusalem there were four within a radius of two miles (verses 17-18). This settlement probably dates from the elevation of Jerusalem to the status of the amphictyonic centre of Israel, and may have served the purpose of counteracting the influence of the local sanctuary at Gibeon and of protecting the Davidic house against a possible rising of the family of Saul in Benjamin, and among the tribes of North Israel, which was more than a mere possibility (witness the cursing of Shimei, 2 Sam. 16.5-14, and the revolt of Sheba, 2 Sam. 20.1-22). It may be thought that the relatively dense Levitical settlement in the restricted area of Benjamin reflects post-exilic conditions, but the association of Jeremiah and his priestly family with Anathoth (Jer. 1.1) is but another indication that the lists of Levitical settlements in Jos. 21 actually reflects pre-exilic conditions.

Using Alt's data for the view that the Pharaohs from the 15th century secured their interests in vital parts of Palestine (such as the south of the coastal plain) by the award of confiscated lands to Egyptian temples ('Ägyptische Tempel im Palästina und die Landnahme der Philister', KS I, 1953, pp. 216-30), as at Gaza ('the city of Canaan' in an inscription of Seti I from Karnak, *ANET*, p. 254) and Ashkelon (in an inscription on an ivory from Megiddo, c. 1350-1150 B.C.), Mazar suggests (op. cit., pp. 204-5) that the system of control of areas of doubtful loyalty by a priestly caste was suggested by Egyptian practice in the reign of Solomon, who was in other respects open to the influence of the higher culture and organization of Egypt. We might even hazard the conjecture that this may have been suggested to Solomon *à propos* of Gezer and its vicinity when this region was handed over to him by the Pharaoh. In the strengthening of his frontiers and strategic approaches after the Disruption of the kingdom, Rehoboam may have continued the policy of settling Levites, especially such as were ejected from the northern kingdom by Jeroboam I, as is specifically stated in 2 Chr. 11.13-17.

Thus while the basis of the list of Levitical settlements may have been David's organization of his kingdom after the incorporation of Canaanite districts and crown properties, possibly recorded on an official document, later adjustments also under Solomon and Rehoboam are reflected in the list in Jos. 21, and possibly the organization by the families of Kohath, Gershon, and Merari is a Priestly adjustment to the passage.

The matter in chapters 13–22 was adapted for incorporation in the Book of Joshua by the attribution to Joshua of the apportionment of the tribal lands, cities of refuge and Levitical settlements, which, in the extent to which it is depicted, is probably unhistorical. However, it may well preserve a historical tradition of the role of Joshua as a supra-tribal judge, whose duties included arbitration in boundary disputes or in disputes regarding responsibility which involved tribal boundaries. The section is also introduced by a preface, which notes in retrospect the apportionment of land to the tribes east of Jordan (13.8–33), already apportioned by Moses (Dt. 3.8ff.; Num. 32.33ff. (P)). The apportionment of the territory of Judah is prefaced by a digression on Caleb's claim on Hebron, which is drawn from Dt. 1.22–46. However, the repetition that Joshua was 'old and advanced in years' in the preface to the apportionment of the land (13.1) and to his valedictory address (23.1) indicates that 13.1–21.45 was a secondary addition to the original Deuteronomistic Book of Joshua, of which chapter 23 is the natural conclusion. The post-exilic redactor probably made the qualifications on the occupation in 15.63, 16.10, 17.12–13, in agreement with Jg. 1.21, 27ff. The role of Eleazar the priest in the apportionment alongside Joshua at the Tent of Meeting at Shiloh (18.1, 19.51) is probably the only substantial contribution of P to this section besides the Priestly retouching of the chapter on the cities of refuge and the note on the families of Kohath, Gershon and Merari in chapter 21. The section is rounded out by a Deuteronomistic epilogue on the Occupation, represented as the fulfilment of the Word of God in blessing. This is probably a reflection of the conditional blessing of God in Dt. 28, which is the leading motif of the Deuteronomistic historical work.

The dismissal of the Transjordanian tribes (22.1–9) is probably also

a secondary Deuteronomic addition. The passage on the controversy on the altar in the Jordan valley, as the role of Shiloh and Phinehas the son of Eleazar indicates, is also a Priestly elaboration, though probably of an earlier tradition. It possibly reflects the local rivalry of Shiloh and Gilgal as the provincial boundary-shrine between Benjamin and possibly Joseph and certainly the Transjordan tribes Reuben and Gad. It could also reflect an incident in the growth of the larger confederacy of all Israel (so K. Möhlenbrink, *ZAW*, N.F. XV, 1938, 246ff.).

In the third section of Joshua we encounter the problem of two formal valedictory addresses by Joshua (chapters 23 and 24). Chapter 23, a homiletic admonition, well impregnated with Deuteronomic phraseology and theology, finds its natural conclusion in Joshua's dismissal of the people and his death and burial in Jg. 2.6-9. This suggests that Jos. 24.1-30 is a later redactional expansion, and indeed patriarchal traditions from the Pentateuchal sources, J, E and P support this conclusion, though the problem of the insertion of chapter 24 is best solved by the recognition that it is an account of a genuine ancient transaction on which chapter 23 is modelled. In chapter 23 the Deuteronomic compiler has drawn upon the tradition of an admonitory address at the conclusion of the sacrament of the Covenant (e.g. Dt. 28) for an appropriate valedictory address by Joshua in accordance with his custom of punctuating his history by a speech from one of his protagonists, which should be both recapitulation and prospectus (see above, p. 2). In chapter 24 the post-exilic Deuteronomic redactor, mindful of the association of the homiletic admonition with the Covenant-sacrament, amplifies by a more formal rendering of that ceremony. Why he did so we may only speculate. Perhaps he felt that this most important feature in the life of Israel, with which Joshua may well have been historically connected in the role in which he is depicted here and at 8.30-35, was not given due prominence by the Deuteronomic compiler in 8.30-35, or perhaps, as the references to patriarchal traditions from J, E and P suggest, he may have felt it appropriate to associate the historical theme in the Law with the theme of the occupation of the Promised Land in Joshua. Though a redactional insertion, however, it is based on a genuine ancient tradition of the Covenant-sacrament,



which, owing to its vital importance in modern research, we may illustrate in detail.

Formally the renewal of the Covenant in chapter 24 conforms closely, though not absolutely, to the pattern of Hittite vassal-treaties from the 14th and 13th centuries B.C., which was first recognized by V. Korošec (*Hethitische Staatsverträge, ein Beitrag zu ihrer juristischen Wertung* (Leipziger Rechtswissenschaftliche Studien, Heft 60), 1931) and more recently applied to Old Testament criticism by G. E. Mendenhall (*Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, 1955, reprinted from BA 17, 1954) and particularly with relation to Jos. 24 by K. Baltzer (*Das Bundesformular*, 1960), and D. J. McCarthy (*Treaty and Covenant* (Analecta Biblica 21), 1963). The form of the Hittite vassal-treaties, which apparently reflected a common form in international law and is still reflected in later treaties imposed by Assyrian kings on their Aramaean vassals in the 9th-7th centuries B.C., is as follows:

- (1) The preamble, where the suzerain declares his identity; cf. Jos. 24.2: 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel.'
- (2) The historical prelude, reviewing the relations of the suzerain with his vassals and declaring his benefactions and his power to punish, often mentioning and describing the land with which the suzerain invests his vassal or which he confirms in his possession; cf. Jos. 24.2-13, a summary statement of Israel's Story of Salvation culminating in the occupation of the Promised Land. The fact that Jos. 24.13 shows such a close verbal agreement with Dt. 6.10b-11 may indicate a common origin within the Covenant-form in the sacrament of the Covenant-renewal, to which Jos. 24 was probably ultimately relevant.
- (3) The basic declaration, stating the relationship demanded of the vassal, introduced like the main business of ancient letters by the phrase 'and now . . .' (*w'attāh . . .*) (Jos. 24.14), which states the main demand of the suzerain in consequence of the situation described in the historical prelude. So Yahweh demands, 'Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt, and serve the Lord'. This claim on exclusive loyalty

- is a regular feature of the Hittite vassal-treaties, where the vassal is expressly forbidden to contract agreements with any other than the suzerain (cf. Jos. 24.23).
- (4) The more detailed conditions, which are a feature of the Hittite vassal-treaties, are lacking in Jos. 24, but it is plausibly conjectured (Steuernagel, Noth) that at the sacrament of the renewal of the Covenant at the amphictyonic assembly (which Jos. 24 reflects) bodies of laws like those included in the Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20.22–23.33) and certainly apodictic laws like the Decalogue in its primitive form were presented. The 'statutes and ordinances' (verse 25) or the 'words' (verses 26, 27) may have such a reference, if they do not rather refer to ritual ordinances such as the Ritual Code in Exod. 34.10–26, as suggested by G. Schmitt, who stresses the emphasis on ritual service in the context (*Der Landtag von Sichem*, 1964, pp. 45ff., 64ff., 80ff., 85).
  - (5) The treaty was formally endorsed by the vassal, either the king or some other representative of the community; cf. Jos. 24.15, where Joshua declares 'as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord', and verses 17–18a, where the people formally admit that God has done for them what the historical prelude describes, and admit the obligations which that implies. In the vassal-treaties it was important that the vassal accepted the treaty of his own free will; cf. the voluntary acceptance of the Covenant by the people in Jos. 24.16, 18, 21.
  - (6) An appeal to the gods as witnesses and guarantors of the bond. In monotheistic Israel, where God was himself a party to the Covenant, such an appeal was impossible, hence 'heaven and earth' are called to witness (Dt. 4.26, 30.19, 31.28); cf. the invocation of natural features along with the gods in Hittite vassal-treaties. Alternatively in Israel the people might invoke themselves as witnesses (Jos. 24.22), implying the adjuration.
  - (7) The treaty is laid under the sanction of the curse, of which the best example in Israel in the context of the Covenant-sacrament are the Twelve Adjurations in Dt. 27.15–26. Formally the adjuration is omitted in Jos. 24, but it is implicit in the engagement of the people, 'Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord' (which is more obvious in the Hebrew than in the EVV.), the



solemn three-fold pledge to allegiance (verses 16, 18, 21), and the solemn warning of the dire consequences of the broken bond (Jos. 24.20), with its obvious reference to the Twelve Adjurations (Dt. 27.15–26) and the admonitory elaboration of this theme in the address which follows in Deuteronomy.

- (8) The recording of the treaty, without which it was not valid; cf. Jos. 24.25–26, 'So Joshua made a covenant with the people . . . and Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God'; cf. Neh. 9.38, M.T. 10.1. This is not necessarily a late feature, as Gressmann (*Die Anfänge Israels* (SAT), 1922, 162) thought, but the reflection of genuine ancient usage. The record might be on a stele, as at Sūjīn in Northern Syria; cf. Jos. 24.27, 8.32.
- (9) Provision was made for the deposit of the record of the treaty, usually at a sanctuary under the feet of the god's image; cf. the tradition of the Ark as the receptacle of the Covenant and the footstool or throne of God. Provision was also made for the regular reading of the treaty, which had its counterpart in Israel in the stereotyped liturgy of the sacrament of the Covenant with the public acknowledgment of the sovereignty of Yahweh and of his historical salvation of Israel, and the public declaration of the law in compendious form, e.g. the Decalogue in its original form and its public endorsement by the people with solemn adjuration (e.g. Dt. 27.15–26).

The recognition of this pattern of the Covenant-sacrament in Jos. 24.1–28 convinces us of the unity of the nucleus of the passage, which is expanded by later glosses and elaborations, reflecting the experience of the Deuteronomic redactor and his knowledge of the narrative sources of the Pentateuch and even of P.

The passage in its present form may have been suggested to the Deuteronomic redactor generally by the appreciation of the cultic background of the paraenetic address in chapter 23; cf. the formal farewell of Samuel, with which the Deuteronomic compiler punctuates that part of his work (1 Sam. 12), and which also reflects the liturgy of the sacrament of the Covenant. The affinity in thought and language between Jos. 24 and Exod. 23.20–33 has been noticed (G. Schmitt, *Der Landtag von Sichem*, 1964, pp. 26ff.), and whatever



conclusion we may reach on the Deuteronomic affinities or otherwise of this passage its significance in the compilation as the paraenetic conclusion to the Covenant-transaction is noteworthy.

Sellin (*Geschichte des israelitisch-jüdischen Volkes*, I, 1924, pp. 98ff.) and Noth (*Das Buch Josua*, 1953, p. 139) venture to find in Jos. 24 a reflection of the actual foundation of the twelve-tribe amphictyony based on the sacramental experience of the Covenant with its historical prelude, effected through the union of the new aggressive elements of Israel and their kin already long settled in the land. This, however, as G. Schmitt objects (*op. cit.*, pp. 35ff.), is a conjecture which lacks adequate textual support. With more justice, he stresses the occasion in the general context of the Covenant-liturgy as that on which new ordinances, probably cultic such as the Ritual Code in Exod. 34.10-26 with its emphasis on the exclusiveness and purity of worship, were laid upon the Covenant-community at a decisive stage of the early settlement in Israel. He emphasizes that this was already a covenanted community, and that nothing in the text suggests that various elements were being so consolidated for the first time. But whatever the historical significance of the occasion—which we do not doubt—the significance of the passage as it stands in its present context is not primarily historical but literary, as an appendix to chapter 23 and a more pointed introduction to the next part of the Deuteronomic history in Judges. As such, though the pattern of the liturgy of the Covenant-sacrament is clearly visualized, it is a somewhat free composition. This is particularly apparent in the historical prelude, which reflects none of the colour or dramatic brevity of the original, and by its diffuse and precise detail, especially regarding the patriarchs, surely betrays familiarity with a literary tradition such as that of the Pentateuch in all its main traditions and even parallel oral traditions, which, rather oddly, come to notice in the Book of Jubilees (11.16ff. and chapter 12) and Moslem tradition.

The book ends with a note on the death and burial of Joshua (verses 29-30), which repeats Jg. 2.8-9; on the burial of the bones of Joseph (verse 32), which reflects Gen. 50.25 and Exod. 13.19 (both E); and the death of Eleazar and his burial on the hill (or 'at Gibeah', RSV) of Phinehas (verse 33), which may reflect a local tradition of

Shechem, such as verses 29-30 and the tradition of the sacrament of the Covenant (verses 1-27).

#### 4. THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

From our literary analysis of the Book of Joshua it is obvious that its value is limited both as evidence for the historical settlement of Israel in Palestine and for the historical significance of Joshua.

In chapters 2-10 the aetiological interest is predominant. Such aetiological traditions reflect conditions at the time when the explanation was offered, and their historical value in relation to the events described must be very critically assessed. The priority of literary analysis of biblical sources must be emphasized in view of the efforts to date the Israelite settlement (as if that were a simple conquest!) by the mechanical means of archaeological data, a method which in Joshua 2-10 raises more problems than it solves. Ai lay derelict between *c.* 2000 B.C. and the 12th century (J. Marquet-Krause, *Syria*, XVI, 1935, p. 326); Bethel was destroyed at the lowest reckoning about half a century before the decisive phase of the Israelite penetration *c.* 1225 B.C. (Albright, *BASOR* 57, 1935, p. 30; cf. G. E. Wright, *JNES* V, 1946, p. 108, '*c.* 1250'); and the fall of Bronze Age Jericho, in so far as it may be dated, is now tentatively suggested by Miss K. M. Kenyon as *c.* 1350 B.C. Now this section of Joshua does not mention the destruction of Bethel (but see below pp. 92, 251), which is attributed to 'the house of Joseph' in Jg. 1.22ff. 'The house of Joseph' could, of course, include Ephraim and Manasseh, but the fact that 'the house of Joseph' is noted in Jos. 17.14ff. as the recipient of one lot in the apportionment of the land suggests that the term refers to a period before the tribe divided into Ephraim and Manasseh. Hence the capture of Bethel (Jg. 1.22ff.) by 'the house of Joseph' may refer to the fall of the place in the latter half of the 14th century or the first half of the 13th, which archaeology attests.

Now in Jos. 24.11 there is a tradition of the fall of Jericho after active opposition, which is quite at variance with the tradition of the miraculous collapse of its walls in chapter 6. This tradition, in so far as it differs from the aetiological saga in which the miraculous fall of



Jericho is transmitted, is worthy of respect, and seems to reflect sober history. The fact that this tradition is expressed in the historical prelude to the sacrament of the Covenant at Shechem in the tribal territory of Manasseh indicates that this was part of the tradition of the house of Joseph, and that it may reflect a genuine incident in the independent penetration of Joseph which Jg. 1.22ff. implies, the fall of Bronze Age Jericho, in so far as the scanty archaeological data may be used, occurring just before the destruction of Late Bronze Age Bethel.

Jos. 2-9, however, with the exception of 8.30-35, which may be displaced (see Commentary *ad. loc.*), refers to action wholly within the tribal territory of Benjamin, so that the tribal traditions of Benjamin are likely to be among the primary sources. Benjamin was traditionally the youngest of the tribes, located, as the name implies, at the southern limit of the area occupied by the tribes of North Israel. This strongly suggests that the traditions of Jos. 2-9, in so far as they refer at all to the Hebrew penetration, reflect the last phase of the penetration, half a century and perhaps more after the fall of Bethel to the house of Joseph. We cannot, however, forthwith accept the account of events in Jos. 2-9 as historical traditions of Benjamin which have been transmitted without embellishment. Alt, for instance, notes that the localities mentioned were either about the sanctuary at Gilgal or on the way there through the territory of Benjamin. The local traditions of Benjamin, therefore, are likely to be transmitted through the cult-tradition of Gilgal, the aetiological traditions being developed with relation to the subject of the cult-legend of the central shrine, the occupation of the Promised Land, to actualize the historical basis of the faith for pilgrims. Such traditions reflect Israel's sacramental experience of the occupation of the Promised Land, but may nevertheless preserve a nucleus of historical fact. However, they must obviously be used critically. We must not forthwith equate faith with fact. Before Gilgal became a shrine of all Israel, however, it was probably, as a shrine on the boundary of Benjamin and some seven miles from Jordan, a sanctuary of particular significance for Benjamin, Ephraim, and the Transjordan tribes of Gad and Reuben, who had once associations west of Jordan (see below, pp. 49, 51, 141). The theme



of the occupation of Canaan may have been the common tradition on which these tribes based their solidarity, apart from the theme of the occupation of the Promised Land, which may have been combined with that of the Law and Covenant as the culmination of the Deliverance from Egypt. The latter theme was specifically associated with the amphictyonic assembly at Shechem, once the central shrine of all Israel.

The sequel to the battle of Gibeon (10.16-43), though not the battle itself (10.9-11, 12b-13a), is also open to serious objections as sober history. There the tradition is the subject of an aetiological story concerning the stones at the mouth of the cave of Makkedah in the Shephelah, to be seen 'to this very day' (10.27), while the sweeping conquest of Joshua through the Shephelah to Lachish (verses 28ff.) and even to Kadesh and Gaza (verse 41) is palpable exaggeration. It is significant that Lachish is not mentioned in the account of the occupation of Judah in Jg. 1.18-21. In the account of David's escapades as an outlaw from Saul it is explicitly stated that Keilah, 7 miles NW. of Hebron and 10 miles NW. of Lachish, was not in Judah (1 Sam. 23.3). In the same context, too, the capture and destruction of Hebron by Joshua (Jos. 10.38-39) flatly contradicts Jos. 14.13, 15.13-14 and Jg. 1.20, which ascribes the capture of Hebron to Caleb. The mention of Hebron 'and all the country of Goshen' (Jos. 10.41), which lay south-west of Hebron (see Commentary *ad loc.*) may well reflect the penetration of the Kenizzites from the south, as Elliger suggests ('Josua in Judäa', *PJB*, 1934, p. 64). The tradition of the battle of Gibeon itself sounds historically credible, the more so as it is attested in a poetical citation from the ancient Book of Jashar (Jos. 10.12b-13a). There is no ground for accepting or rejecting the tradition of the allies of the King of Jerusalem from Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, but it is inconceivable that the King of Jerusalem should remain inactive against an enemy who occupied the plateau seven miles to the north on his most vulnerable side, and who had made an alliance with Gibeon, his most formidable rival in that direction. The tradition of the destruction of Jerusalem by the tribe of Judah (Jg. 1.8) is possibly connected with this incident. In view of the fact that the city itself remained in the possession of the Jebusites and outside Judah (Jos.

15.8, 63) until its capture by Joab, the kinsman of David (2 Sam. 5.6; 1 Chr. 11.4-8), it is unlikely that the city itself was taken and burnt, as Jg. 1.8 states. However, the historical source of the tradition may well be the destruction of the villages in the cultivable plain of the Rephaim, which was occupied by Judah when the city was still in Jebusite hands (Jos. 15.8). This land, the only appreciable cultivable land about Jerusalem, would obviously not have been ceded without a struggle. Hence the defeat of the King of Jerusalem about Gibeon would be an opportune occasion for the encroachment of Judah from Bethlehem, which had probably been occupied long before by independent penetration from the south, or by connubium, as the incident of Judah and Tamar in Hebron (Gen. 38) and the presence of their descendants in Bethlehem (Ru. 4.12ff.) suggest. The sequel to the battle of Gibeon, according to Jos. 10.10-11, was the pursuit of the defeated enemy down the pass of Beth-horon to the Northern Shephelah. We note the restraint in this account of the sequel to the battle, which is described as a rout and not as an occupation, and stops just beyond the mountains, as distinct from verses 28ff., which extend operations as far as Gaza and even Kadesh. Nor is there any aetiological application of the tradition of the actual battle. Instead the incident is associated with the passage in the Book of Jashar, which, with no tendentious explanation, directly reflects the historical events which it narrates. The mention of the valley of Aijalon in the citation is significant, and seems at first sight to connect directly with the pursuit by the Descent of Beth-horon (verse 11). This would accord with the impression given by the EVV that the appeal was for time to take full toll of the enemy before the sun set, a poetic hyperbole in the original, which has been literally interpreted as a miracle in the later prose expansion (verse 14). While this interpretation is possible, however, we would rather agree with B. J. Alfrink ('Het "stil staan" van zon en maan in Jos. 10.12-15', *Studia Catholica* XXIV, 1949, pp. 238-69) that the appeal was for the prolongation of the night and a delay of daylight to exploit the Israelites' night march and surprise their better-equipped antagonists, tactics adopted by Gideon (Jg. 7.15ff.) and possibly by Naphtali against Hazor and her allies at the Waters of Merom (Jos. 11.6-8). Now Jos. 10.9 gives a clear hint of such tactics, stating that 'Joshua came upon them suddenly, having

marched up all night from Gilgal'. Gilgal may be a secondary feature here, evidence of the combination of the preceding Benjaminite traditions associated with Gilgal and an independent tradition of a conflict with the Amorites, who opposed the Ephraimite expansion southwards under Joshua at Gibeon, as Alt suggested (*KS* I, 1953, p. 188). If this is so, the mention of the valley of Aijalon in the poetic citation may indicate the line of advance from the foot-hills north of the pass, the hill-country of Ephraim, where tradition knew the tomb of Joshua c. 15 miles N. of Gibeon at Timnah, which is probably the modern Khirbet Tibneh on the Roman road from Gophna (modern Jifneh) to Antipatris (Rās el-'Ain). In this connection it must be noted that Joshua is not actually mentioned in the poetic citation, but there is little doubt that the narrator who cited the poem was transmitting a faithful tradition in ascribing the appeal to him. Thus this incident, as an exploit primarily of Ephraim under the leadership of Joshua, was a genuine historical tradition. It must be dated from after the time when Joseph subdivided into Ephraim and Manasseh, and probably after the settlement of Benjamin, who probably participated in the battle. Alt (*op. cit.*, p. 188) feasibly suggests that it was this association which led to the incorporation of the incident into the Benjaminite traditions of Gilgal, and, we believe, to the secondary note of Gilgal as the place from which Joshua began his night march.

We should further find a historical nucleus in the tradition of the defeat of the King of Hazor (Jos. 11.1, 4-9), and at least the fact of the destruction of this great city, by far the largest antiquities site in Palestine. The association of Joshua with this event and the general occupation of the North, however, is probably secondary.

The tradition of the victory of Israel over Hazor and her allies, as far as the Jordan valley south of the Sea of Galilee and the coastal plain by Dor, seems extravagant in view of the fact that the Israelites who settled about the coastal and central plains could not dispossess the inhabitants of such insignificant places as Nahalol and Kitron (Jg. 1.30), to say nothing of the larger cities of Megiddo, Taanach, and Bethshan. We suspect Jos. 11.2-3, therefore, to be a later expansion, and the hackneyed list of the peoples of Canaan in verse 4



suggests the Deuteronomist. Verses 11-15, too, seem to be Deuteronomistic (cf. Dt. 20.16ff.). In this passage, however, the destruction of Hazor probably rests on a genuine historical tradition. To be sure, Alt's caution must be observed not to treat every destruction of the Late Bronze Age in Palestine as evidence of the coming of the Hebrews. But the fact that the Late Bronze Age city of Hazor was destroyed c. 1225 B.C. must be taken as support of the biblical tradition, especially since, with the relaxation of the hold of Egypt on Palestine in the end of the 13th century, the absence of the Philistines (who in any case came in force only in the first quarter of the following century) from the interior of the country and the fact that no Canaanite city could match the size and strength of Hazor, the only enemy who could have destroyed the city was the Israelites (F. Maass, 'Hasor und das Problem der Landnahme', *BZAW* LXXVII, 1958, 106-7). This, however, could scarcely have been effected by the Israelites by siege, but could only be in consequence of a defeat in the field, such as Jos. 11.1, 4-9 records at the Waters of Merom. The irretrievable fall of Hazor soon after the decisive phase of the Hebrew penetration c. 1225 B.C. is supported by the significant absence of Hazor as a centre of Canaanite resistance in the district of Naphtali (Jg. 1.33), from which Madon, Shimron, and Achshaph, which are also associated with Hazor in Jos. 12.19-20, are also omitted. Verse 1, therefore, may belong to the historical tradition. Apart from the general reference to 'the kings that were in the northern hill-country', which may have amounted to no more than the villages among the scrub-covered hills of Upper Galilee, the reference to the hegemony of Hazor over 'the Arabah south of Chinneroth' deserves to be treated seriously. If Chinneroth denotes the city at Tell el-'Oreimeh overlooking the northern edge of the plain of Chinneroth, this place, c. 8 miles S. of Hazor and not at all comparable in size and strength, though commanding the trunk highway which ran through the Wādī el-Hammām to Madon (Ḥaṭṭīn) was almost certainly subject to Hazor. If, on the other hand, Chinneroth denotes the lake and the Arabah the Jordan valley, this also is feasible in view of the complaint of the King of Piḥilu (Fihl) in the Amarna Tablets that the King of Hazor had taken three cities from him (F. Thureau-Dangin, 'Nouvelles Lettres d'el Amarna', *R d'A* XIX,

1922, pp. 91-108). Commanding the ford of the Jordan on the road to Damascus and the way over to the broken valley of the River Liṭānī in the valley between Lebanon and Antilebanon, Hazor was interested in such places as Chinneroth and Madon on the trunk highway to the south, which in turn were dependent on her through her control of the way to Damascus. Thus the power of Hazor attested in the Amarna Tablets and the size and strength of the place out of all comparison with other sites in Palestine in the Late Bronze Age, which the recent Israeli excavations under Yigael Yadin have revealed, support the situation depicted in Jos. 11.1, while the destruction of the city indicates that verse 10 is also a genuine historical tradition. Critics had already admitted this; cf. Eissfeldt (*Einleitung* . . ., 3rd ed., 1964, p. 352), who supposed that this, first orally transmitted and then placed in doubtful chronological sequence, cannot be treated uncritically as history, so also Noth (op. cit., p. 67), who, however, feasibly in our opinion, suggests that the exploit was that of a tribal leader of Naphtali, Joshua being a secondary feature.

Our appraisal of the historical significance of Joshua himself must also be governed by the nature of the literary evidence. The figure of the commander-in-chief of all Israel in the sweeping combined operation which resulted in the total reduction of Palestine from the Ladder of Tyre to Kadesh and from the Jordan to the Mediterranean is unrealistic, as is indicated by the much more sober account of the limited and piece-meal settlement in Jg. 1 and indeed in Jos. 13.13, 15.63, 16.10, 17.11-13, 16-18.

Nor is it likely that Joshua was original in the traditions of Gilgal and Benjamin in chapters 2-8, which are not hero-legends but aetiological sagas independent of the figure of Joshua or any other hero.

In the battle of Gibeon with the citation from the old epic we are possibly introduced to the historical Joshua, whose home was only fifteen miles away. Like the charismatic leaders in the Book of Judges, he was signalized as the possessor of the Divine favour (*b'rākāh*) by his successful surprise attack on the Amorites under the King of Jerusalem at Gibeon. This, like the exploits of the charismatic leaders in Judges, was a local exploit, which involved only Joshua's own tribe of Ephraim and possibly also the neighbouring

Benjamin, being probably an incident in the southern expansion of Ephraim. The limited nature of the action and its sequel in the pursuit down the Descent of Beth-horon to Azekah and Makkedah (but no farther) without the capture of any city (verses 9-11) stands in striking contrast to the extravagant claims of a campaign by Joshua as far as Gaza and Kadesh, capturing or destroying capital cities and putting the inhabitants wholesale to the sword (verse 28ff.), before returning to base at Gilgal by Jericho (verse 43). This unrealistic reconstruction makes nonsense of the fact that the tribe of Dan, north of the Shephelah of Judah, was so harassed by the Amorites that it had to migrate to the head-waters of Jordan (Jg. 18). The local significance of Joshua in the southern expansion of his own tribe of Ephraim does not necessarily exclude his leadership of all Israel, but it makes it very unlikely in the tradition of the sweeping conquest of the South and a similar operation in Galilee (chapter 11), with the comprehensive list of defeated rulers of the various fortified centres throughout the land (chapter 12), at blatant variance with Jg. 1 and similar passages in Joshua itself.

Two other passages, according to Alt's feasible suggestion ('Josua', KS I, 1953, pp. 189ff.), seem to reveal the historical Joshua, this time as a figure of more than local significance. The division of the whole land by lot among the various tribes may be suspect by the same token as the account of Joshua's complete conquest of the land. The assignment by lot, too, assumes the settlement as a single invasion, a combined operation, which is contradicted by the statements already cited in Jg. 1 and similar passages in Joshua and by the general account of the settlement in Judges. The conception of the assignment by lot, too, as Alt suggests (op. cit., p. 190), seems the naïve reflection of the annual or periodic distribution of communal village or tribal lands by lot, which was, at least until Mandatory times, practised among the peasants of Palestine and Syria (G. Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*, II, 1964, pp. 40-41). But while we may suspect the description of tribal territories supplemented by lists of towns from the administrative records of the Monarchy (see above, pp. 23ff.), Alt has demonstrated the genuine antiquity of the tribal boundary lists. These go back to the Israelite settlement before the Monarchy, as is indicated by the regard which



was paid to tribal divisions (with, of course, modifications) in Solomon's fiscal administration (1 Kg. 4.7ff.) and the division of certain fortified cities, e.g. Tappuah (Jos. 17.8) and Jerusalem (Jos. 15. 63), from their cultivable lands. This can only reflect the disruption of Canaanite economy in the Israelite settlement, and is incidentally another argument for the piecemeal settlement by the tribes operating independently rather than the combined operation described by the Deuteronomic compiler. If the settlement had really been made as a result of apportionment by lot after the conquest was complete, as Jos. 14ff. represents, such divisions would have been avoided. Nevertheless, the very fact of the tribal boundary lists, which related to practical problems such as rights of grazing and watering and responsibility in blood-revenge, implies an authority in these matters before whom disputes might be settled. The real significance of Joshua may have been as arbiter in such matters, as the incident in Jos. 17.14ff. indicates, which must surely date before the division of 'the house of Joseph' into Ephraim and Manasseh. Arbitration in tribal boundary disputes obviously required a supra-tribal authority, and thus Joshua had an authority recognized by all Israel. This was possibly the source of the tradition that the tribal boundaries which he upheld were actually established by him at the indication of the sacred lot. It also suggested that the local traditions of the struggles in the occupation of the land in chapters 2-11 should be subsumed under his name, the status of Joshua as *generalissimo* being further suggested by his leadership in the battle of Gibeon, probably mainly an Ephraimite exploit, but not improbably a joint enterprise with Benjamin.

The position of Joshua as arbiter in tribal disputes indicates his authority in the Israelite confederacy, and his real historical significance may be revealed in chapter 24, which, from a traditio-historical point of view, is supported by 8.30-35 (see above, pp. 32ff.). Here Joshua emerges as the authority who mediated the Covenant in the amphictyonic assembly, as Moses had mediated it at Sinai. It is not certain whether it was his possession of the Divine *b'rākāh* signaled by his victory at Gibeon which marked him out for this role. Perhaps the tradition which associates Joshua with the oracle in the Tent of Meeting in the desert (Exod. 33.11) and with Moses himself

in the original Covenant at Sinai (Exod. 24.13) should be taken more seriously than Alt has treated it ('Josua', KS I, pp. 176-77), though we must respect his caution in the paucity of evidence. This association of Joshua with the Tent-oracle and the mediator of the Sinai-Covenant is perhaps itself suggested by the actual role he played in the amphictyony of Israel in Palestine. This he may well have brought into being on the basis of the Covenant-experience, as Sellin maintained, seeing in chapter 24 not the tradition of the recurring sacrament of the Covenant in the amphictyonic assembly of all Israel, but of the actual inauguration of the amphictyony. This passage, together with 8.30-35, may reflect this important event, though the evidence of the passages themselves is not so specific as Sellin considered.

The historical source of the tradition which attributes the conquest of the whole land to Joshua may be specifically the militant exploits of the House of Joseph in the capture of Bethel (Jg. 1.22-26 and also probably in Jos. 8, the tradition of the capture of Bethel being transferred to the tradition of the fall of Ai) and in the battle of Gibeon (chapter 10), in which Joshua was probably personally involved. There may even be a genuine historical basis for the tradition which associates Joshua with the victory over Hazor and her allies by the Waters of Merom (11.1-11). There it is noteworthy that Hazor, and not the Israelites, took the offensive. This might have been the reaction of Hazor to the establishment of the Israelite confederacy under Joshua, which roused the Canaanites to the fact that the Hebrews who had infiltrated and settled the less desirable parts of the hills of Galilee were no longer negligible *disiecta membra* but, now associated with more aggressive elements in a religious amphictyony which had no parallel in Palestine, were an offensive potential in their midst (see further in the Commentary on chapter 11).

THE BOOK OF  
JOSHUA



THE BOOK OF  
JOSHUA

1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, <sup>2</sup> 'Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land which I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. <sup>3</sup> Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have

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1. THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN 1-12

DEUTERONOMIC INTRODUCTION 1.1-18

This effects a transition to a new phase of the history by the familiar Deuteronomic convention of speeches by way of recapitulation and introduction. The theological character of the Book of Joshua in the Deuteronomic history is forthwith emphasized in the address of God to Joshua as representative of the people, and in Joshua's address to Reuben and Gad and half-Manasseh (verses 12-15) and their response (verses 16-18). Such historical details as are incorporated in the sequel are subsidiary to the theme of the fulfilment of the divine promise through Moses to Israel, which is conditional upon Israel's fidelity to the Covenant. Joshua, too, in this context is subsidiary to Moses, his 'servant' (verse 1; cf. Dt. 31.1-8), fulfilling Moses' programme (verses 5, 7-8, 12-18; cf. Dt. 31.1-8), though from this he derives his courage (verses 5-6, 9), strength (verses 16-18), and authority (verses 16-18). The engagement of Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh (verses 12-18; cf. Dt. 3.12-13, 18-20) emphasizes the view of the Deuteronomic compiler that what is to follow is the occupation of the Promised Land as the culmination of the Drama of Salvation from Egypt and the engagement of Israel in God's Covenant. The full, rhetorical style and the hortatory and admonitory tone of the Deuteronomist is unmistakable, especially in verses 3-9, 11b-18. In contrast verses 1-2, 10-11a are in narrative style, and give the historical context. These passages may also be from the Deuteronomic compiler's free adaptation of an older tradition, possibly derived from the liturgy of the sacramental crossing of the Jordan as an element in the cult at Gilgal. The tradition of the role of the Transjordan tribes as an advance guard (verse 14b) in military formation, if not actually in arms (verse 14; cf. Dt. 3.18-20), may reflect an element in a ritual procession, but it differs so greatly from the presentation of the occupation as an unhindered and miraculous crossing of the Jordan and an act of faith vindicated by God's giving of the land to Israel (eight times repeated!) practically as a *fait accompli* (verse 3), that it may well reflect a

given to you, as I promised to Moses.<sup>4</sup> From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphra'tes, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall

genuine historical tradition. This is possibly connected with Reuben's quondam occupation of the land west of Jordan by Jericho, indicated by the feature 'the Stone of Bohan the son of Reuben' (15.6, 18.17) south of Jericho.

#### DIVINE ADDRESS TO JOSHUA 1.1-9

**1. the servant of the LORD:** the stock title of Moses, and also applied to Joshua (24.29). It was applied to David and the kings of Judah; cf. 'the servant of El' as a royal title in the Rās Shamra legends. It thus denotes a leader of the sacral community, especially in his sacral function as mediator of the Covenant in the case of Moses and Joshua.

**Joshua . . . , Moses' minister:** cf. Exod. 24.13, 33.11; Num. 11.28, which probably reflect the later tradition of Joshua as leader of all Israel in the occupation of the Promised Land, enhancing his significance by the association with Moses, though his role in the battle against Amalek (Exod. 17.9-11, 14b, 16) and in the reconnaissance of Palestine (Num. 13.17bff.) may be historical (K. Möhlenbrink, 'Josua im Pentateuch', *ZAW*, N.F. XVIII, 1942, 14-58). The name signifies 'Yahweh is Deliverance', the Greek form through Aramaic being Jesus (Ac. 7.45; Heb. 4.8, Greek text).

**2. this Jordan:** the demonstrative may indicate that *yardēn* is actually a common noun, 'river'. The reading of the demonstrative, however, is uncertain, being omitted in LXX.

**3. as I promised to Moses:** cf. Dt. 11.24ff., see above, p. 48.

**4. this Lebanon:** the demonstrative reads strangely and may agree with 'wilderness', 'Lebanon' being an interpolation. In the regular Deuteronomic description of the Promised Land (cf. Dt. 1.7, 11.24), however, 'Lebanon' appears, suggesting the extent of the land to the south and east steppes (the wilderness) and north-west to, but not including, the western slopes of Lebanon, and thence north-east to the Euphrates. This reflects the extent of the influence of David and his control of the trade-routes after his defeat of the Aramaeans (1 Kg. 4.21, 24, M.T. 5.1, 4; 2 Chr. 9.26).

**all the land of the Hittites:** probably a later interpolation, being omitted in LXX and Vulgate. The ethnic significance of 'Hittites' cannot be pressed. The term is regularly used in Assyrian inscriptions to describe Syria and Palestine long after the collapse of the Hittites of Anatolia, and reflects the Hittite domination of North Syria, now so well illustrated by Hittite political correspondence from the palace of Rās Shamra (c. 1365-c. 1190 B.C.). Before **as far as the great river** and **to the Great Sea** the Hebrew text reads 'and'.



be your territory. <sup>5</sup> No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. <sup>6</sup> Be strong and of good courage; for you shall cause this people to inherit the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. <sup>7</sup> Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. <sup>8</sup> This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success. <sup>9</sup> Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.'

**5. fail:** lit. 'let go slack, relax' (trans.) (cf. Dt. 4.31, 31.6, 8).

**6. Be strong and of good courage:** lit. 'be strong and rally' (sc. your heart), a feature of the hortatory style of the Deuteronomic introduction, being repeated four times in chapter 1. This emphasizes the Deuteronomist's theological view of the occupation. God effects the fulfilment of his promise; man's part is to hold fast in faith.

**which I swore to their fathers to give them:** the theme of the Promise to the patriarchs (Gen. 12.7ff.) is combined with that of the occupation of the land as the culmination of the Drama of Salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*), as already in the older narrative sources of the Law.

**7. the law:** an interpolation, as indicated by LXX; cf. the sequel 'do not depart from it' (masculine singular pronominal suffix), which does not agree with the feminine antecedent 'law' (*hat-tôrāh*). The M.T., though true to the tradition which associated the Covenant and Law with the Drama of Salvation, reflects a legalistic view later than the Deuteronomic compilation, associating Moses particularly with the law. The conception of the law is developed further in verse 8, which reflects the later Deuteronomic view of the history of Israel as a response to God's precept and submission to his guidance. The conception of the law, actually **this book of the law**, as the object of study and the key to practical success, recalls Ps. 1.2-3.

**9. be not frightened, neither be dismayed:** both strong words, lit. 'be not struck with awe (or terror), neither be shattered'. These verbs are the antithesis of 'be strong and of a good courage', indicating the Deuteronomic view of God's control of history and the demand for man to keep his morale in confidence of



10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, <sup>11</sup> 'Pass through the camp, and command the people, "Prepare your provisions; for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan, to go in to take possession of the land which the LORD your God gives you to possess."'

12 And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manas'seh Joshua said, <sup>13</sup> 'Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, "The LORD your God

God's effective power, manifested in the break in the enemy's morale, which is a feature of the Deuteronomic presentation of the occupation (e.g. 2.9, 11, 24).

#### PREPARATION TO CROSS THE JORDAN 1.10-11

In this brief narrative fragment, probably rounded out by Deuteronomic phraseology in verse 11b, the only note of preparation is for three days' provisions. This may indicate a military movement, but it seems more likely to be based on statutory ritual instructions for a procession from the amphictyonic shrine at Gilgal to Shittim (2.1) beyond Jordan, a token sojourn in tents there, and a sacramental crossing of the Jordan.

**10. officers** (Hebrew *šōṭ'rim*) may signify either field officers or, as in Dt. 20.5, officials who had charge of conscription and exemption from service. The word has a wide connotation in the Old Testament; cf. 'foremen' associated with the Pharaoh's task-masters (Exod. 5.6, 10) and of civil officials associated with judges (Dt. 16.18). It means 'policemen' in modern Hebrew.

**11. provisions:** generally signifying for a journey.

**three days:** if it does not reflect a ritual associated with the sacramental crossing of the Jordan in the cult of Gilgal, this may be suggested by the three days' absence of the spies at Jericho.

#### JOSHUA'S APPEAL TO THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL IN TRANSJORDAN; THEIR READY RESPONSE

##### 1.12-18

Cf. Dt. 3.18-20, with close verbal correspondence. The section is mainly motivated by the conception that all Israel took part in the occupation, but may preserve the tradition of an early penetration by Reuben and Gad, suggested by the seniority of these tribes, Reuben being the oldest of the sons of Jacob and Gad being third in the numbering of the tribes in Num. 26.15. The long history of Reuben is suggested by the fact that though traditionally associated with Transjordan they had once been settled west of the Jordan, as indicated by the Stone of Bohan, the son of Reuben, south of Jericho (15.6, 18.17). The first significance of Gilgal may have been as a boundary shrine of Gad, Reuben, and Benjamin, as Möhlenbrink suggests *à propos* of 22.1-8 (ZAW, N.F. XV, 1938, pp. 248-49).

is providing you a place of rest, and will give you this land.' <sup>14</sup> Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan; but all the men of valour among you shall pass over armed before your brethren and shall help them, <sup>15</sup> until the LORD gives rest to your brethren as well as to you, and they also take possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them; then you shall return to the land of your possession, and shall possess it, the land which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.' <sup>16</sup> And they answered Joshua, 'All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. <sup>17</sup> Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the LORD your God be with you, as he was with Moses! <sup>18</sup> Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage.'

**14. beyond the Jordan:** from the standpoint of the Deuteronomic historian, forgetting momentarily that the scene was cast east of the Jordan. An aggressive penetration was visualized, whether on any sound basis of traditions of Reuben, Gad, and Benjamin or not is uncertain, by the engagement of **all mighty men of valour** (*kōl gibbôrê ha-hayil*). *Gibbôr* has the Arabic cognate *jabbār*, with the nuance of 'giant' or 'bully'. Primarily meaning a freeborn Israelite, able and liable to defend the community in arms, it comes to mean those able by their property to equip themselves and their followers for war, and eventually, under David's adaptation of the feudal system indicated in 1 Sam. 8.11, those who were enabled to do so by the royal grant of fiefs.

**armed** in this context is rather a guess at the meaning of Hebrew *h<sup>a</sup>māšim*. The word is used in Num. 32.17 and Jos. 4.12 referring to the same incident. In Jg. 7.11 it refers to the Midianites in Gideon's reconnaissance, and in Exod. 13.18 it describes the condition in which the Hebrews left Egypt. In the last passage LXX renders 'in the fifth generation', but since it renders the word in Jg. 7.11 'fifties' it is likely that the Greek translator is ignorant of the specific meaning of *h<sup>a</sup>māšim*, which he connects with the Hebrew word for 'five'. In the context of Jos. 1.14, 4.12, it may be cognate with Arabic *hamisa*, 'to be courageous, or aggressive', but as it is a passive participle it is more likely to be connected with Arabic *hamsa*, 'five', and may mean 'in battle order'; cf. Arabic *hamis*, 'in five-formation' (of an army), i.e. centre, vanguard, rearguard, and two wings.

2 And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, 'Go, view the land, especially Jericho.' And they went, and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab,

#### THE RECONNAISSANCE OF JERICHO AND THE INCIDENT OF RAHAB 2.1-24

This is the first of a number of aetiological traditions in narrative style attached to Jericho (chapters 2, 6) and places in the vicinity of, or on the way to, Gilgal (chapters 3, 4, 5, 7, 8), e.g. the traditional crossing-place of the Jordan and the stones commemorating this event (3.1-5, 4.1-9, 20-22), the traditional place of circumcision (5.2-9), the theophany of the Captain of the Lord's Host (5.13-15), all of which were developed in connection with the sacrament of the occupation of the Promised Land at the shrine of Gilgal, with the story of the destruction of Ai ('the Ruin') (7.1-8.29), into which is inserted the story of Achan in the Valley of Achor (7.11-26). These were combined probably by a collector of these traditions at an early literary stage (see above, p. 19), having received some unity already through their association as edifying stories for pilgrims to the central shrine of Gilgal. Their artificial unity and their original independence is indicated, as Noth observes (*Das Buch Josua*, 1953, p. 21), by the fact that there is no essential connection between the fall of Jericho in chapter 6 and the reconnaissance in chapter 2, though, to be sure, the conclusion of the Rahab story (2.1-24) is inserted in chapter 6 (verses 22-25), with the note on the survival of a Canaanite family in Jericho 'to this day' (verse 25), which betrays the aetiological tradition. These traditions were incorporated into the Deuteronomic history in their narrative form in which the pre-Deuteronomic compiler or collector transmitted them, but they have been amplified by Deuteronomic sentiment and language at various stages since the compilation of the Deuteronomic history. An outstanding example of this in 2.1-24 is the recapitulation of the Drama of Salvation and the monotheistic declaration by Rahab in verses 10-11.

In the incident as a whole the reconnaissance of Jericho is inconsistent with the view of the occupation as the fulfilment of the divine promise by his sovereign power (5.1), as exemplified in the miraculous collapse of the walls of Jericho (chapter 6), except perhaps that in revealing the anxiety of the king of Jericho (2.2-3) the story emphasizes the low morale of the Canaanites, which 1.5 implies. Behind the story of the spies there may be an independent historical tradition of the capture of Jericho by treachery (so Möhlenbrink, *op. cit.*, p. 258; Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 22), the red thread in the window of a house on the wall perhaps really denoting a weak point, or at least that at which the Hebrews could expect collaboration. The tradition of the fall of Jericho by treachery, however, is suppressed in its conclusion by the theological emphasis on the direct divine activity in the miraculous collapse of the walls in chapter 6, where incidentally no further mention is made of the red thread. Together with this tradition of the fall of Jericho by



and lodged there. <sup>2</sup>And it was told the king of Jericho, 'Behold, certain men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.' <sup>3</sup> Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, 'Bring forth the men that have come to you, who entered your house; for they have

treachery the passage includes the aetiological theme of the survival of Rahab's family (her 'house' in Semitic idiom) in respect of an oath (verses 12-14, 17). The text translated by LXX seems to have been aware of two distinct traditions since only the oath is mentioned as a safeguard for Rahab in verse 12 without any mention of a sign, the sign of the scarlet cord being mentioned distinct from the oath in verses 17-20. The combination of the motif of the red thread and the survival of Rahab's 'house' may have been suggested by the prophylactic significance of the red cord; cf. the crimson thread attached to the door of the Temple in the interim before the scapegoat has been destroyed in the desert (Mishnah, Yoma 6.8), the use of blood as a prophylactic on the door-posts of Arab peasants (S. A. Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion Today*, 1902, p. 191), and also the blood rite of the Passover. The tradition of the betrayal of Jericho is not developed, and after the independent tradition of the miraculous collapse of the walls the conclusion of the aetiological account of the survival of Rahab's 'house' is appended (6.22-25).

**1. Shittim:** (Hebrew *haš-sittim*, 'the acacias'). Here the Israelites cohabited with Moabite women (Num. 25.1). It is also called Abel-shittim ('the stream of the Acacia Trees') (Num. 33.49), probably to be identified with Tell el-Ḥammām, where the Wādī eš-Šuweib breaks from the hills on the road over the Allenby bridge from 'Ammān to Jericho (N. Glueck, *Explorations in Eastern Palestine IV*, 1951, pp. 378-82).

**especially Jericho** may be displaced from after 'they went', where LXX has it in addition to its position in M.T. In view of the role of Jericho in the sequel, however, it should certainly be retained as in M.T. With its strong spring Jericho and its lands were a conspicuous oasis in an otherwise desolate plain c. 5 miles W. of the Jordan, and had been occupied and fortified since c. 7000 B.C. The site (Tell es-Sultān) is so badly eroded that the reconstruction of the Late Bronze Age is hazardous, but with reserve Miss K. M. Kenyon, who excavated it most recently, suggests that it was destroyed c. 1350-1325 B.C. (*Digging up Jericho*, 1957, pp. 261-62). The tradition of its fall to the Hebrews by treachery, if that is historical, may perhaps be connected with a penetration by Reuben and Gad (see above, 1.12-18) at this time or with the penetration of Joseph, with which the fall of Bethel before the decisive phase of the Hebrew penetration c. 1225 B.C. was associated (Jg. 1.22-25, see above, pp. 37, 46; cf. Jos. 24.11). The city was again occupied less extensively in the Early Iron Age (c. 1200-c. 900 B.C.), when the king of Moab had his seat there (Jg. 3.13) before his assassination by Ehud. Perhaps the meagre settlement in the interim of a site which ought to have been much more heavily fortified gave rise

come to search out all the land.' <sup>4</sup> But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them; and she said, 'True, men came to me, but I did not know where they came from; <sup>5</sup> and when the gate was to be closed, at dark, the men went out; where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.' <sup>6</sup> But she had brought them up to the roof, and hid them with the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof. <sup>7</sup> So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords; and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

8 Before they lay down she came up to them on the roof, <sup>9</sup> and said to the men, 'I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of

to the tradition of the miraculous collapse of the walls (chapter 6), a tradition which would certainly not be discouraged in the theme of God's settlement of his people in the Promised Land in the cult-legend of Gilgal.

**the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab:** the presence of strange men in such a house would attract no undue attention. 'The house of Rahab', on the other hand, may mean 'the family of Rahab', possibly the name of a Canaanite family who had survived and had special privileges among the Israelites at Jericho, as 6.17b, 22, 23, 25 suggest. Perhaps they had long had relations of hospitality and even connubium with the Hebrews in their seasonal migrations. Alternatively, the tradition of Rahab as a harlot may reflect the significance of the term *bêt rāḥāb*, which Noth suggests may mean 'a brothel' (cf. Isa. 57.8; Ezek. 16.24).

**2. the king of Jericho** was just another minor local ruler like those attested in the Amarna Tablets (c. 1411-1358 B.C.). His alarm at two men from the Hebrews reflects the defensive mood of the Canaanites, emphasized by the Deuteronomist at verses 9, 11.

**4. hidden them:** certainly to be read with LXX for Hebrew 'hid him', which has the wrong pronominal suffix with the imperfect. This is an obvious scribal error of *w* for *m*, which closely resemble each other in the proto-Hebraic script.

**6. the roof** is the familiar flat roof of the Oriental house, which is used for entertainment of guests (1 Sam. 9.25), for social parties, and also for storage of fuel. The laying out of the flax stalks to dry before being beaten out is natural since they were safe there from animals.

**7. the fords:** there are several within range of Jericho. The Jordan, though not wide, runs deep and swift over a muddy bed, so that fords are important.

**9.** Rahab's admission that **the Lord** (Yahweh) had given Israel the land and had sent panic among the Canaanites is probably a reflection of the liturgy from the

the land melt away before you. <sup>10</sup> For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. <sup>11</sup> And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any man, because of you; for the LORD your God is he who is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. <sup>12</sup> Now then, swear to me by the LORD that as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign, <sup>13</sup> and save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.' <sup>14</sup> And the men said to her, 'Our life for yours! If you do not tell this business of

sacrament of the occupation of the land from the shrine of Gilgal; **melt** means 'lose coherence'; cf. the Arabic cognate in the Qur'an, which describes the confusion and incoherence of waves and the helpless bodies of the damned weltering in a sea of fire.

**10.** A Deuteronomic abbreviation of the Drama of Salvation, the triumph over Sihon and Og being a Deuteronomic peculiarity; the confession of monotheism is a later theological amplification (cf. Dt. 4.39).

**utterly destroyed:** i.e. devoted to destruction as sacrosanct, as Jericho in 6.17, on which see.

**11. hearts:** i.e. reason and will in Hebrew idiom.

**there was no courage left:** lit. 'spirit no longer stood', i.e. maintained itself. The spirit (Hebrew *ruah*) is the invasive divine influence which nerves and enables a man to achieve more than is natural. Here it may refer to leadership as in the case of the judges of Israel and the enthusiasm which such leaders could inspire to dare and do.

**12. deal kindly with:** better 'deal loyally with', lit. 'make *hesed* with'. The word *hesed* expresses dealings between God and man which imply loyalty to the Covenant. Here it expresses the mutual loyalty of Rahab and the spies, which is confirmed by the oath. It is significant that 'and give me a sure sign' is omitted in LXX, which suggests two independent traditions; cf. verse 18, where the preservation of Rahab and her family is associated with the red thread and not with the oath. It is nevertheless natural to expect a token, here lit. 'a trustworthy sign' in connection with the oath; cf. the pledge in Gen. 38.17ff.

**13. our lives** renders the basic meaning of Hebrew *nepeš*, often mistranslated as 'soul'.

**14. if you do not tell this business of ours:** the stipulation for Rahab's discretion suggests that she was involved in treachery. The phrase is omitted in LXX.



ours, then we will deal kindly and faithfully with you when the LORD gives us the land.'

15 Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she dwelt in the wall.<sup>16</sup> And she said to them, 'Go into the hills, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers have returned; then afterward you may go your way.'<sup>17</sup> The men said to her, 'We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours which you have made us swear.'<sup>18</sup> Behold, when we come into the land, you shall bind this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household.<sup>19</sup> If any one goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we shall be guiltless; but if a hand is laid upon any one who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head.<sup>20</sup> But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your

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15. This verse seems parenthetical, interrupting the conversation between Rahab and the spies. It is possibly an indication of the composite nature of the narrative.

16. **the hills:** i.e. the hill-country just west of Jericho, which, being in the rain-shadow, is largely uninhabited and rough, therefore well adapted for concealment.

17. **We will be guiltless:** better 'quit of' (cf. Gen. 24.41, also of quittance from an oath). In verses 17-20 three conditions are apparently imposed upon Rahab, the fixing of the red thread in the window (verse 18), the gathering of her family into the house (verses 18-19), and secrecy (verse 20).

18. **scarlet cord:** see above, Introduction to chapter 2, p. 54. Rahab became an eminent example of faith in early Christian exposition (Heb. 11.31) and good works which justify the doer (Jas 2.25), and in Jewish tradition, which makes her the ancestress of eight prophets and priests, of which her inclusion in the genealogy of our Lord (Mt. 1.5) is a reflection. So the scarlet cord in the allegorical interpretation of the Church Fathers becomes the prototype of atonement.

The display of the red cord in the window, here obviously facing out from the city wall, indicates that it was represented as a sign not of the house to be spared but of the point of attack at which the assailants could expect collaboration.

19. **his blood shall be on our head:** blood, peculiarly associated with life (Dt. 12.23), had for ancient Israel a mysterious quasi-automatic potency, which demanded and exacted vengeance (Gen. 4.10), a conception expressed by the covering of shed blood with earth or salt (Jg. 9.45; cf. A. M. Honeyman, 'The Salting of Shechem', VT III, 1953, pp. 192-95).

oath which you have made us swear.' <sup>21</sup> And she said, 'According to your words, so be it.' Then she sent them away, and they departed; and she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

<sup>22</sup> They departed, and went into the hills, and remained there three days, until the pursuers returned; for the pursuers had made search all along the way and found nothing. <sup>23</sup> Then the two men came down again from the hills, and passed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun; and they told him all that had befallen them. <sup>24</sup> And they said to Joshua, 'Truly the LORD has given all the land into our hands; and moreover all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of us.'

**3** Early in the morning Joshua rose and set out from Shittim, with all the people of Israel; and they came to the Jordan, and lodged there

THE CROSSING OF JORDAN 3.1-17 (see also 4.1-24)

In the Deuteronomic history and probably in its sources this is noted as the achievement of God and not of Israel, a view which is apparent through the element of miracle (3.6, 8, 13, 15-17, 4.18) and the role of the Ark (3.5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 17, 4.18), which may reflect a ritual enactment (H. J. Kraus, *VTI*, 1951, pp. 190, 194-98; but cf. Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 33), as suggested by the ritual preparations (3.5) and the stipulation for keeping a deferential distance from the holy object (3.4).

The passage is a notorious complex of repetitions, overlappings, parentheses, and variant traditions, which sadly impairs the dramatic effect of the older narrative source. Here the older critics assumed the customary variety of literary sources familiar in the Law. J and E could not, however, be distinguished, so a JE redaction was postulated; P was not extensively represented, and D was easily distinguished by diction, style, and theology. The free composition of the Deuteronomic compiler and his retouching of the older narrative sources is still to be noted in the D elements recognized by the older critics. P is probably represented less than was once thought, being confined to ritual particularities, e.g. 3.4b, 4.15-17, 19. In the older narrative sources which remain there is evidence of variants and redundancies. This may be explained to a certain extent by variant traditions, and Möhlenbrink suggests a Shiloh tradition of a crossing at Admah, which ignores the stones at Gilgal, and a Gilgal tradition, to which this is fundamental (*ZAW*, N.F. XV, 1938, pp. 256-58). More recent critics (e.g. Noth, Hertzberg) see these rather as the result of continued elaboration of one basic tradition which developed through the intense interest of pilgrims in connection with the cult at Gilgal when it became a central shrine (Hertzberg, *op. cit.*, p. 26), reflecting a sacramental re-enactment

of the passing of the river (H. J. Kraus, *op. cit.*), and this is the view we adopt.

The later literary elaboration is most apparent in the terminology of the Ark, which reflects respectively the older narrative sources ('the ark' or 'the ark of Yahweh'), the Deuteronomist ('the ark of the Covenant'), and the Priestly redactor ('the ark of the testimony'), which reflect the developing theological conception of the Ark as the symbol of Yahweh's presence (older narrative sources), the receptacle of the Covenant document (D), and a synthesis of the two conceptions of the Ark as the place where God met men at his own discretion in revelation in the law and in mercy, as in the atonement (G. von Rad, 'Zelt und Lade', *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, 1958, pp. 109-29). There is further evidence of revisions in the agents involved, 'those who bore the ark' (3.15a), 'the priests bearing the ark'; cf. 'the Levitical priests' (3.3), and Joshua, who directs the priests (3.6, 8, etc.).

There is similar variation, with similar explanation, in the traditions of the setting up of the stones commemorating the crossing of the Jordan, which are also of an aetiological character. According to 4.3-8, twelve stones were set up, apparently on the west bank of the ford, but possibly at Gilgal (cf. verse 20), in the river bed (verses 9-10), and definitely at Gilgal (verse 20). The number twelve certainly reflects a later stage than the phase of penetration to which it purports to refer, reflecting as it does Gilgal as the shrine of the twelve-tribe confederacy, which was realized only after a considerable period of settlement in Palestine. The tradition of the twelve stones in the bed of the Jordan is possibly the reminiscence of a stone causeway, much needed in the muddy bed of the Jordan, or stones marking the ford (so Steuernagel), possibly associated with the ceremonial crossing in the ritual of the cult at Gilgal. The number twelve in this case may have been attached to those causeway stones through the influence of the twelve memorial stones on the west bank and/or at Gilgal. The role of the Ark in the crossing is possibly also a late tradition (so Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 33), reflecting the ritual of the sacramental crossing of the Jordan after Gilgal had become the central shrine of all Israel.

The crossing of the Jordan had a high significance in the historical consciousness of Israel, emphasized in the passage by the recurrence of the word 'āḥar, which Hertzberg (*op. cit.*, p. 24) notes twenty-two times. The Jordan, though apparently an effective barrier with its deep, swift, muddy stream and soft bed between jungle growth (*ez-zawr*), bordered by broken, marly land (*ḡattara*), which is quite barren, was never a decisive political boundary. In the Deuteronomic history, however, the crossing of Jordan marks a decisive juncture from a theological point of view, heralding the consummation of the story of God's gracious acts in the fulfilment of the promise. This theological orientation was perhaps given by the part that the crossing of the river played in the cult-legend of nearby Gilgal, being moreover naturally associated with the crossing of the Red Sea, which is, in fact, recalled (4.23). Historically considered, however, the crossing of the Jordan had the significance which the Deuteronomic compiler emphasizes in so far as, associated with the aggressive elements of the Hebrews of the centre of Palestine, fresh from their



before they passed over. <sup>2</sup>At the end of three days the officers went through the camp <sup>3</sup> and commanded the people, 'When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it, <sup>4</sup> that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, a distance of about two thousand cubits; do not come near it.' <sup>5</sup>And Joshua said to the people, 'Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.' <sup>6</sup>And Joshua said to the priests, 'Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass on before the people.' And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

7 And the LORD said to Joshua, 'This day I will begin to exalt you

Covenant experience in the desert, it marked the beginning of a movement which resulted in the effective realization of the twelve-tribe confederacy of Israel.

**1. lodged:** Hebrew 'passed the night', implying one night, but cf. verses 2-3, which connect with 1.11, which depicts the preparation for crossing after three days.

**2-3. the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God and the Levitical priests** (cf. Dt. 18.1) are certainly Deuteronomic conceptions (see Introduction to chapters 3-4, p. 59), but the tradition of an encampment on the east bank for three days (cf. 1.11; 2.16, 22) before crossing under the direction of stewards, RSV 'officers' (1.11), may go back to a sacramental experience in the cult of Gilgal (cf. Hos. 2.14-15).

**4. there shall be a space between you and it:** this is in form parenthetical. The specification of the exact distance belongs to P, but the demand for a respectful distance may well reflect the early cultic ordinance; cf. the incident of Uzzah in an early monarchic source (2 Sam. 6.7).

**two thousand cubits:** cf. Num. 35.5 (P), the distance of the boundaries of the Levitical lands from the actual settlements.

**5. Sanctify yourselves:** i.e. condition yourselves ritually for the presence of God; cf. before the Covenant ceremony in Exod. 19.10, 14, 15 (E), which involved washing of clothes and abstention from sexual intercourse. God is present in the Ark. In verses 5-6 the instructions are given by Joshua, and not, as in verses 2-4, by the 'officers'. The instructions probably go back to cultic observance, or at least to the cult-legend at Gilgal, but the role of Joshua reflects the literary stage at which the various local traditions were subsumed under the activity of Joshua. Verse 5 was probably followed immediately by verse 11.

in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. <sup>8</sup>And you shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, "When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan." <sup>9</sup>And Joshua said to the people of Israel, 'Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God.' <sup>10</sup>And Joshua said, 'Hereby you shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Per'izzites, the Gir'gashites, the Amorites, and the Jeb'usites,

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7. The Deuteronomic compiler repeats the divine commission to Joshua as the successor of Moses (1.5, 17), but this is no pointless redundancy. What is stated generally in 1.5, 17 is now particularized, hence **This day I will begin to exalt you . . .**

10. **the living God:** Hebrew *'el hay* (Hos. 1.10, M.T. 2.1; Ps. 42.2, M.T. 3; 84.2, M.T. 3); cf. Dt. 5.26, and the oath 'As Yahweh lives' (Jg. 8.19, etc.), or 'As I (Yahweh) live' (Dt. 32.40), which the term here probably reflects.

**drive out:** better 'dispossess', lit. to cause to inherit (by depriving others of their inheritance), hence used in the sense of 'dispossess' with the dispossessed as the direct object. This phrase and the list of the seven peoples is Deuteronomic.

**Canaanites** refers primarily to the inhabitants of the cities of the Phoenician coast (Jos. 13.4; Isa. 23.11), *kinahna*, the source of purple dye (*kinahlu*), then secondarily to those in regions of Syria and Palestine under their cultural influence (e.g. Num. 13.29; Jos. 5.1; Jg. 5.19), then generally in Egyptian inscriptions from just before c. 1200 B.C. to Palestine as a whole. The **Amorites**, whom Num. 13.29 locates specifically in the mountains, refers primarily to the descendants of tribal invaders from the north-east steppes, whose settlement is evidenced in archaeological stations at the end of the third millennium, and in lists of their names and settlements in Egyptian execration texts of the 19th century. Canaanites and Amorites were the Semitic elements in the population. There is no evidence of the **Hittites** of Anatolia in force in Palestine, and the term probably refers loosely to non-Semites from the north, mostly Hurrians, whose peculiar names are attested in documents and seals from Palestine of the 14th century. The **Hivites**, for whom LXX occasionally reads *Chorraioi*, are probably also Hurrians, like the **Girgashites**. The name Perizzi in the Amarna Tablets suggests that **Perizzites** may be a genuine ethnic term, but *p'rāzôt*, denoting unwalled open villages as distinct from walled towns in Dt. 3.5 and 1 Sam. 6.18, suggests that the term may be really appellative. The **Jebusites** are particularly associated with Jerusalem, but the ethnic significance of the term, if there is any, is uncertain.

<sup>11</sup> Behold, the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth is to pass over before you into the Jordan. <sup>12</sup> Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man. <sup>13</sup> And when the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the LORD of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be stopped from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap.'

14 So, when the people set out from their tents, to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, <sup>15</sup> and when those who bore the ark had come to the

11. This is the natural sequel to verse 5 in the narrative source, though later worked over by the Deuteronomic compiler.

**the covenant**, in the absolute with the ungrammatical definite article before 'the Lord', is an obvious Deuteronomic interpolation, as 'the covenant of the Lord' in verse 17 indicates, following, as it does, 'the ark', with the definite article where a construct would be used.

**the LORD of all the earth** is peculiar to late passages (Mic. 4.13; Zech. 4.14) and is probably a Deuteronomic elaboration of Dt. 10.14.

12. This sentence hangs in the air, being resumed in its natural context in 4.2-3, describing the setting up of the memorial stones, which is suspended in favour of the narrative account of the miraculous passing of the Jordan (verses 14-17a), introduced by Joshua's speech, where the miracle described in verse 16 is anticipated in verse 13.

13. **in one heap**: (Hebrew *nēḡ*). Used only of the dammed-up waters of the Jordan here and at verse 16 and, significantly for the development of the tradition, the dammed-up waters of the Red Sea (Exod. 15.8; Ps. 78.13).

14. **set out**: the term, like so much in Hebrew, goes back to desert usage and means originally 'pulled up the tent-pegs' in migration.

15. **overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest**: the time is late April by Jericho. This parenthesis has respect to the time of the crossing, which is fixed by its sacramental celebration at Gilgal 'on the tenth day of the first month', i.e. Nisan, or April, on post-exilic reckoning. The river was swollen at this time by the melting snows of Hermon and its massif, where it rises. The banks refer to *ez-zawr* (see Introduction to chapter 3, p. 59), which, because of the flood-water, supports a luxuriant jungle growth which was proverbial (Jer. 49.19, 50.44; Zech. 11.3). This is explicitly stated to enhance the miracle, but see on verse 16.

16. M.T. states that the damming of Jordan occurred at **Adam**, far from the place of crossing. This place is Tell ed-Dāmiyeh, just over a mile from the



Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), <sup>16</sup> the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap far off, at Adam, the city that is beside Zar'ethan, and those flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were wholly cut off; and the people passed over opposite Jericho. <sup>17</sup> And while all Israel were passing over on dry ground, the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

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confluence of the Wādī Zerqā (Jabbok) with Jordan, about sixteen miles from Jericho. **Zarethān** is of uncertain location, near Abel-meholah (1 Kg. 4.12). If the latter place is correctly located at Tell Abū Sifrī c. 10 miles S. of Beth-shan, so 12 miles N. of ed-Dāmiyeh, this would agree with its location by Rabbi Johanan (3rd century A.D.) 12 miles from Adama. However the damming of Jordan may have been coloured by cultic celebration and the tradition of the crossing of the Red Sea, there is every likelihood that an actual natural phenomenon underlies the narration. Abel (*GP* I, p. 481) cites the Arab historian en-Nuwairī, who attests the damming of the Jordan about ed-Dāmiyeh for some ten hours on the night of December 7, 1267 through the undermining of the high marl banks by flood and by natural collapse or local earthquake. A similar phenomenon, also about ed-Dāmiyeh, for twenty-one and a half hours occurred in 1927. The high, dry marl banks, unprotected by turf, in the exceptionally tortuous course of the swift Jordan might easily collapse with this effect, especially in flood time.

**the Salt Sea:** the Dead Sea, from which there is no outlet. Through heavy evaporation it is saturated with a heavy solution of all the chemicals brought down by the Jordan to such an extent that no life is possible in it.

**opposite Jericho:** rather vague. If Gilgal is to be located north-east of the old site of Jericho (see on 4.19) the place of crossing may be about the Allenby Bridge, and not the traditional crossing-place and place of the baptism of Our Lord shown to pilgrims since Byzantine times south-east of Jericho.

**17. of the covenant:** a late Deuteronomic elaboration, as suggested by the preceding word 'ark' in the absolute with the definite article instead of the construct. For the earlier sources the Ark was either 'the ark' simply or 'the ark of Yahweh'; for the Deuteronomist it was 'the ark of the covenant', not a symbol of God's presence, nor his throne, but simply a receptacle for the covenant contract. The agency of God in the miracle is emphasized here in the Ark being held in the river bed until the crossing was complete.

**4** When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, <sup>2</sup> 'Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, <sup>3</sup> and command them, "Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests' feet stood, and carry them over with you, and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight." ' <sup>4</sup> Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe; <sup>5</sup> and Joshua said to them, 'Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, <sup>6</sup> that this may be a sign among you, when your children ask in time to come, "What do those stones mean to you?" ' <sup>7</sup> Then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial for ever.'

#### THE MEMORIAL OF THE CROSSING 4.1-24

This is a composite tradition (see Introduction to chapters 3-4, pp. 58f.), presumably introduced by 3.12.

**3. from the very place where the priests' feet stood:** lit. 'from the place of standing', which is ambiguous as to time, and may denote where their feet should stand. In verse 5 twelve men are sent on ahead of the Ark with the instructions to take each a stone on his shoulder, which rather suggests that the stones were taken from the east bank and laid in the river bed to give a firm footing in the ford. There is obviously a confusing complication of traditions here, but the twelve stones carried by a representative from each tribe relates the memorial to the twelve-tribe confederacy which was later realized in the settlement. The threefold narration with verbal repetition is familiar in the Rās Shamra myths and legends in epic style, and may be designed to inculcate the significance of the stones, **when your children ask in time to come . . .** (verses 6ff.). RSV treats the infinitive *hākīn* (M.T.) as a dittograph after *hak-kōh<sup>a</sup>nīm*.

**6. in time to come:** lit. 'tomorrow'; cf. Exod. 13.14 (regarding the Passover cult-legend) and Dt. 6.20 (of the Law as a whole). The practice of systematic instruction in the symbolism of the cult as related to Israel's historical faith was well established in ancient Israel (cf. Dt. 6.7), and, as here, conditioned the development of cult-legend to recorded history.

**7. the waters . . . were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD;**

8 And the men of Israel did as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, as the LORD told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. <sup>9</sup>And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day. <sup>10</sup>For the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan, until everything was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to tell the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua.

The people passed over in haste; <sup>11</sup> and when all the people had finished passing over, the ark of the LORD and the priests passed over before the people. <sup>12</sup> The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manas'sseh passed over armed before the people of Israel, as Moses had bidden them; <sup>13</sup> about forty thousand ready

the divine agency is clearly emphasized. 'The covenant' is probably a Deuteronomic expansion.

**8. the place where they lodged:** i.e. 'spent the night'. Close by the west bank may be visualized, as in early Christian tradition, by the ford associated with the Baptism, but Gilgal near Khirbet el-Mafjār, c. 5 miles W. of the ford by the Allenby Bridge (cf. verse 20), is not excluded.

**9. in the midst of the Jordan:** a variant tradition, probably later than the account of the twelve memorial stones in verses 2-8, and related to a feature known at the time of the compiler to this day. A foundation of the ford is here definitely visualized. The introduction of 'stones' without the definite article, if textually genuine, indicates an independent tradition, though the number twelve indicates the influence of the tradition of the twelve memorial stones of Gilgal.

**11. before the people:** i.e. *coram populo*, since the people had already all passed over.

**12.** The specific notice of Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh is probably a Deuteronomic amplification (cf. 1.12-18; Num. 32.20ff.). Behind the tradition in verses 12-13 there may lie the ritual of a ceremonial crossing in the cult of Gilgal as an amphictyonic sanctuary of the twelve tribes.

**13. about forty thousand** is usually taken as a P addition, but in that case we should expect closer agreement with the numbers of the tribes in Num. 1.21, 25, 35, which is about three times as great. 'Forty' is simply the conventional number of Semitic folklore, and the passage, though a later amplification, is from another hand than P.



armed<sup>14</sup> for war passed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho.<sup>14</sup> On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him, as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life.

15 And the LORD said to Joshua,<sup>16</sup> 'Command the priests who bear the ark of the testimony to come up out of the Jordan,'<sup>17</sup> Joshua therefore commanded the priests, 'Come up out of the Jordan.'<sup>18</sup> And when the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD came up from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up on dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before.

19 The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped in Gilgal on the east border of

**ready armed for war:** etymologically 'girt' for active service, perhaps reflecting the realization of the sacral community as those ready to fight in the holy war, ability for military service qualifying one for the status of a member of the community of the people of God.

**the plains of Jericho:** cf. 2 Kg. 25.5. The steppe-land between the depression of the Jordan and the oasis of Jericho, which for lack of water is semi-desert.

14. The Deuteronomic compiler or redactor notes the completion of the crossing as the authentication of the divine commission to Joshua (cf. 3.7), who on this tangible evidence of the divine favour (*b'rākāh*) merits the respect which the people accorded to Moses (cf. 1.17).

15-17. This is certainly later than the narrative source in verse 11, where the priests with the Ark had already come out of the river bed. As 'the ark of the testimony' (verse 16) indicates, this is P, and is inserted as an introduction to the return of the water (verse 18).

18. **were lifted up:** Hebrew 'drawn out', i.e. of the mud in the bed of the Jordan. The same verb (*nāṭaq*) is used of the drawing away of the defenders of Ai in 8.16.

19. **the tenth day of the first month:** i.e. on Babylonian reckoning, the pre-exilic month Abib, post-exilic Nisan, our April. Such accurate dates usually indicate P. The date may reflect the association of this public sacrament with the tradition of the selection of Passover lambs on the tenth day of the first month (Exod. 12.2-3, P) in connection with the preparation for the Exodus.

**Gilgal:** on the east edge of the oasis of Jericho. In Byzantine times it was the site of a church, and has been until recently located at Khirbet en-Nigleh, just over 2 miles SE. of Jericho, where, however, there is no trace of ancient occupation

Jericho. <sup>20</sup> And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. <sup>21</sup> And he said to the people of Israel, 'When your children ask their fathers in time to come, "What do these stones mean?"' <sup>22</sup> then you shall let your children know, "Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground." <sup>23</sup> For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, <sup>24</sup> so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty; that you may fear the LORD your God for ever.'

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before Byzantine times. Surface exploration by J. Muilenburg, however, revealed Iron Age remains just north of Khirbet el-Mafjār, which fits Josephus's location ten stades from Jericho and fifty from the Jordan (Ant. V, i, 4 (20)), i.e. at the ford by the Allenby Bridge. Pillars inscribed with crosses in the Umayyad winter palace near by are probably from the Christian church noticed by early medieval pilgrims north (actually north-east) of Jericho. Arabic *jiljūliyah* means 'a circle', probably referring to the twelve stones of our tradition, each symbolizing one of the twelve tribes of the Israelite confederacy. However, no conspicuous evidence of Iron Age occupation can be expected. Gilgal was only a shrine, and that probably of the simplest, not an occupied settlement, but frequented only at festal seasons, like the Moslem shrine of Nebī Mūsā south-west of Jericho, which is occupied at times other than the Nebī Mūsā Festival only by the custodian and his family. Gilgal was probably significant as the sanctuary of an earlier, smaller confederacy of Reuben, Gad, and Benjamin (so Möhlenbrink, *ZAW*, N.F. XV, 1938, pp. 246ff.). It was not until the decline of Shechem and Shiloh that it became the shrine of all Israel in the time of Saul (1 Sam. 11.15, 15.33). There are thus tradition-complexes from two periods of the history of Gilgal underlying Jos. 2-12: the earlier traditions of Reuben, Gad, and Benjamin, and perhaps Joseph, for whom Gilgal was probably also a boundary shrine, being eventually subsumed in the tradition of the occupation of the Promised Land as the culmination of the Drama of Salvation associated with the Covenant tradition of the twelve-tribe confederacy, which was the direct source of the pre-Deuteronomic compilation in Jos. 2-12. The representation of Gilgal, therefore, as the first amphictyonic sanctuary of all Israel in Palestine is an anachronism.

21-24. Cf. verses 6ff. The passage is probably from the Deuteronomic redactor, as suggested by the monotheism of verse 24 (vocalizing the Hebrew text to read 'that they might fear' (RV) for the ungrammatical 'that you may fear' (RSV)).

23. Note the association with the passing of the 'Reed' Sea, which was also the historical prelude to the Covenant in the assembly of the sacral confederacy,

**5** When all the kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites that were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over, their heart melted, and there was no longer any spirit in them, because of the people of Israel.

**2** At that time the LORD said to Joshua, 'Make flint knives and circumcise the people of Israel again the second time.' <sup>3</sup> So Joshua made flint knives, and circumcised the people of Israel at Gib'eath-ha-ar'aloth. <sup>4</sup> And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt. <sup>5</sup> Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people that were born on the way in the wilderness after they had

latterly at Gilgal, which may have coloured the tradition of the crossing of Jordan.

#### AT GILGAL 5.1-15

This is prefaced by a statement (verse 1) of the effect on the morale of the 'Amorites' and 'Canaanites' (see on 3.10), a Deuteronomic note which closes the first episode in the occupation of the land and emphasizes the omnipotent divine activity in the occupation, which is to be characterized by a series of miracles.

There are apparently three independent traditions here, the circumcision of the people (verses 2-9), the first celebration of the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the Promised Land (verses 10-12), and the theophany of the Captain of the Lord's Host (verses 13-15). The first is a topographical aetiological tradition explaining the origin of the name 'the Hill of Foreskins', presumably by Gilgal. The second seems at first sight a ritual interpolation, with an antiquarian note on the cessation of the manna. Older critics assigned this to P, but a genuine old tradition of an inaugural rite of Unleavened Bread, possibly associated with the seasonal migration of nomads, with which the Passover is also associated, may underlie the passage, and 2 Kg. 23.22 recognizes a tradition of the Passover as a public rite at the central shrine in the time of the judges. The date (verse 10) and the phrase 'on that very day' (verse 11) are usually assigned to P (Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 39), but Hertzberg (*op. cit.*, p. 34, n. 1) objects that P would have been more specific, 'the fourteenth day of the month' simply indicating the full moon. Our view (see below) is that there are more indications of P than Noth admits. The third tradition, the theophany of the Captain of the Lord's Host, is a local aetiological legend authenticating a holy place, perhaps Gilgal itself, as Wellhausen con-



come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. <sup>6</sup> For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the nation, the men of war that came forth out of Egypt, perished, because they did not hearken to the voice of the LORD; to them the LORD swore that he would not let them see the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>7</sup> So it was their children, whom he raised up in their stead, that Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

8 When the circumcising of all the nation was done, they remained in their places in the camp till they were healed. <sup>9</sup> And the LORD said to Joshua, 'This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.' And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.

sidered (*Die Composition des Hexateuchs* . . . , 2nd ed., 1889, p. 123), or at least a sacred place in the immediate neighbourhood (see below, *ad loc.*); cf. Möhlenbrink (op. cit., pp. 263ff.), who takes the passage either as the introduction to the fall of Jericho (chapter 6) or, as he prefers, the authentication of the amphictyonic shrine in 8.30ff., which he regards as Shiloh, Shechem in that tradition being taken by him as secondary.

### *The Circumcision 2-9*

The circumcision, later performed in infancy on the eighth day, was probably originally done at puberty, signaling fitness for marriage (cf. Exod. 4.24-26), war (warriors are twice mentioned, verses 4, 6, as noted by Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 32), and, in short, membership of the religious community, hence, in connection with the amphictyonic sanctuary of Gilgal, the tradition may have a genuine historical basis. The passage is complex, however, the early narrative source being amplified by two different explanations of the incident, verse 6, which by its language and theology is certainly Deuteronomic, explaining verse 4, and verses 5 and 7b explaining that it was the children born on the way from Egypt who were uncircumcised, verse 7a reconciling the two explanations. The tradition of the circumcision is unskillfully combined with the popular etymology of Gilgal. **This day I have rolled away (root *gālal*) the reproach of Egypt from you** (verse 9). The reproach of Egypt was not being uncircumcised, since it is stated that the Hebrews, while in Egypt, were circumcised (verses 4f.), as were also the Egyptians. Whatever the tradition was which concluded with verse 9, it was lost or omitted when the various traditions were subsumed under the name of Joshua,

10 While the people of Israel were encamped in Gilgal they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at evening in the plains of Jericho. 11 And on the morrow after the passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. 12 And the manna ceased on the morrow, when they ate of the produce of the land; and the people of Israel had manna no more, but ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

13 When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked,

when the conclusion was unskilfully combined with the tradition of the circumcision, a different aetiological tradition explaining 'the Hill of Foreskins' (**Gibeath-haaraloth**) (verse 3). We consider that 'the reproach of Egypt' was the servile status of the Hebrews there, who were not yet a religious community, a status which they realized with the experience of the Covenant, expressed at the central shrines, first at Shechem, then at Shiloh, and then at Gilgal. The Hill of Foreskins by Gilgal may have been associated with circumcision as a rite of initiation into the sacral community at the central shrine: hence the association of the two traditions. Whatever the historical basis of the tradition may have been, it subserved the Deuteronomist's theological presentation of history by signifying in accordance with the significance of circumcision in his time an initial act of dedication prior to the occupation of the Promised Land.

#### *The Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread 10-12*

It might be supposed that the notes on the Passover **on the fourteenth day of the month at evening** (verse 10) and the eating of the produce of the land **on the morrow, after the passover, that very day . . . unleavened cakes and parched grain** (verse 11), are a late interpolation by P, suggested by the known custom of ritual desacralization before the common use of the new produce. Admitting Hertzberg's objection that P would have been more specific in the date in verse 10, we should limit the contribution of P to 'on the morrow, after the passover, on that very day, unleavened cakes and parched grain' (cf. Lev. 23.14, P). The parched corn may signify the desacralization of the new grain by fire, as in the Baal-myth of Rās Shamra (Gordon, *UH* 49, II, 30-37; J. Gray, *Documents from Old Testament Times*, edited by D. W. Thomas, 1958, pp. 130-31), but this is uncertain, since in Lev. 23.14 parched corn is enumerated with bread and orchard fruit as the regular diet, with the injunction that they should not be eaten 'until this same day', when the new crop was desacralized by the offering of the first sheaf (of the barley harvest). This desacralization rite of Unleavened Bread was associated with the Exodus in the old ritual codes (Exod. 23.15, E; 34.18, J), with which the Passover was also associated (Exod. 12.21-27, J), the two festivals, which thus

and behold, a man stood before him with his drawn sword in his hand; and Joshua went to him and said to him, 'Are you for us or for our adversaries?' <sup>14</sup>And he said, 'No; but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and worshipped, and said to him, 'What does my lord bid his servant?' <sup>15</sup>And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, 'Put off your shoes from your feet; for the place where you stand is holy.' And Joshua did so.

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coincided in time, being associated in Dt. 16.1-8. The association of the festivals in Jos. 5.10-11 in conjunction with the associations of both in time and in their commemoration of the Exodus in J is highly significant in view of the statement in 2 Kg. 23.22 that the Passover which was celebrated at the Temple by Josiah had not been so celebrated since the days of the Judges.

If the tradition of the Passover and Unleavened Bread in the Plains of Jericho was part of the pre-Deuteronomic tradition, its inclusion in the Deuteronomic history at this point after the circumcision of the people is governed by the limitation of the Passover to the Israelites as distinguished by circumcision (Exod. 12.44, P), and by the mention of the deliverance from Egypt in verses 2-9. As Passover marked the break with Egypt, the rite of Unleavened Bread for the Deuteronomic historian suitably inaugurates the occupation of the Promised Land with its fruits which, as the Lord's, are fittingly made available for Israel by this rite of desacralization. The association may well go back before the Deuteronomic history. Just as the localities near the central shrine of Gilgal were invested with associations with the Drama of Salvation, so the great annual festivals, which the Ritual Code in Exod. 34.14-26 (J) insists on being celebrated at the amphictyonic shrine, would naturally be associated with the Drama of Salvation, as indeed the Ritual Code and Exod. 12.21-27 and 13.3-10 (both J) indicate.

#### *The Theophany of the Commander of the Army of the Lord 13-15*

Such a theophany is usually associated with the authentication of a holy place (cf. Bethel, Gen. 28.12), which is clearly indicated in verse 15. This might have been Gilgal, especially if 'by Jericho' (verse 13) means 'in the region of Jericho'; cf. Syriac 'in the plains of Jericho'. But it may denote a sanctuary, which such a place as Jericho would certainly have, where nomads in their seasonal migrations may have participated in certain rites and festivals with the people among whom they had seasonal grazings (cf. the participation of the Hebrews with the Moabites in the cult of Bethpeor (Num. 25.1-5)). The traditions of the rite of Unleavened Bread (verses 10-12), which in this case may have been associated with such seasonal migrations, may, in fact, have been celebrated with the Canaanites at this shrine in



the early stages of the infiltration of the Hebrews. Since prophetic guilds were generally associated with shrines, 'the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho' in the days of Elijah (2 Kg. 2.5) may have been associated with this shrine, though here, as in the present passage, 'in Jericho' may refer to the oasis rather than the town, denoting Gilgal. The reference, of course, may be to any holy place near Jericho or Gilgal, even to a tree or rock of traditional sanctity which, for the benefit of pilgrims and in the interests of orthodoxy, was invested with significance in the Drama of Salvation, the cult-legend of Gilgal. The theophany in its original version need not have authenticated a holy site, but simply the particular commission of Joshua, the authentication of a holy site being added (verse 15). More detailed particularization, however, is impossible since the passage is clearly fragmentary. This is certainly indicated in verse 14 after the declaration of the identity of the commander of the army of the Lord, where the words 'I have now come' certainly introduced the object of the theophany. The theme is not pursued, however, the sequel describing Joshua's reverent reaction and the revelation of the sanctity of the place (verse 15). Noth (op. cit., p. 23) supposes that the details of the revelation concerning the shrine by Jericho may have been suppressed by the early compiler of the traditions through motives of orthodoxy.

In the context of the Deuteronomic history the incident serves to authenticate Joshua as a resolute yet reverent leader who was a worthy successor to Moses (cf. 1.1-9), and to set the stage for the collapse of Jericho by direct divine agency, which may have been the theme of the incident in the pre-Deuteronomic compilation.

**2. flint knives:** apparently *de rigueur*; cf. the circumcision of Moses' son by Zipporah (Exod. 4.25), and an Egyptian sculpture (ANEP, Pl. 629). The flint, as well as being antiseptic, reflects the inhibition against metal, the secret of an exclusive smith caste, whom primitive superstition suspected as able to invest it with a baneful influence; cf. the ban on metal-hewn stones in the altar (Exod. 20.25; Dt. 27.5; Jos. 8.31), and *per contra* iron as a prophylactic in dealings with the fairies or vanished races in folklore. The Egyptian sculpture just cited and probably, we think, Exod. 4.24-26 indicate that circumcision was a rite of puberty in preparation for marriage and for full responsibilities and rights in the community, including war service and membership of the sacral community. It is significant that among those circumcised in the Egyptian period and the sequel, warriors are twice mentioned in the Deuteronomic expansion (verses 4, 6), and the association of circumcision at puberty with full membership of the sacral community would explain the association of the rite with the amphictyonic shrine of Gilgal. Israelite usage transferred the rite from puberty to infancy, where it signified dedication and adoption into the religious community. In the Deuteronomic history the incident is used to accentuate the fitting dedication of the people of God as a prelude to the occupation of the Promised Land; cf. the vicarious circumcision of Moses (Exod. 4.24-26), used by the J compiler as a fitting prelude to his mission.

**3. Gibeath-haaraloth:** either the pre-Israelite name of a local feature near

Gilgal, which is explained by popular etymology ('the Hill of Foreskins') or it was the place where circumcision actually took place as a rite of admission into the sacral community.

4-7. Explanatory note by the Deuteronomic compiler and by the later redactor (see Introduction to chapter 5, p. 69).

8. **till they were healed**: an excellent example of the range of meaning of the verb *hāyāh*, which means generally 'to live'. Here, as regularly in the Syriac version of the healing miracles of Jesus, it means 'restoration to full health'. Texts concerning 'life' and 'death' in the Old Testament must be handled with great care by systematic theology.

9. **I have rolled away** (Hebrew *gallōf*): the popular and quite unsound etymology of Gilgal, which actually means 'stone circle' (4.19, 20), fairly common in various Palestinian sites still named Jiljūliych.

**the reproach of Egypt**: probably not the uncircumcised state, but the status of slaves and 'a mixed multitude', not a sacral community, as Israel was only after the Covenant experience and later in the twelve-tribe confederacy in Palestine (see Introduction to chapter 5, pp. 69f.).

10. **the passover** (Hebrew *pesah*): the etymological significance of which is still uncertain, was a nomad rite probably associated with the annual migration to grazings on the aftermath of the harvest in the settled land. It was eventually invested with a historical significance as a memorial of the Exodus (Exod. 12.21-27, JE; Dt. 16.1-6), an association which was deliberately inculcated in the religious community of Israel (Exod. 12.27). The Festival of Unleavened Bread, which fell at the same time in the month Abib, is similarly associated with the Exodus in the ancient festal calendars in Exod. 23.15 (E) and Exod. 34.18 (J) and in Dt. 16.3. The association of the two festivals in the context of the Drama of Salvation in Jos. 5.10-12 may reflect the communication of the historical experience which was the basis of the faith of the Mosaic community to kindred elements now united in the confederacy of Israel. Here the association with the central shrine of Gilgal is highly significant.

The ancient festal calendars in Exod. 23.15 (E) and Exod. 34.22-23 (J) say nothing of the Passover, which was associated with the Festival of Unleavened Bread inaugurating the barley harvest in the P passages (Exod. 12.1-20; Lev. 23.5-8; Num. 28.16-25). The Passover as a pilgrimage feast celebrated at the Temple was an innovation by Josiah, the description of whose great Passover at Jerusalem makes no mention of Unleavened Bread. Dt. 16.1-8, referring to the same period, is still conscious of Passover and Unleavened Bread as two distinct festivals, now probably combined as an innovation. But 2 Kg. 23.22, though emphasizing the novelty of Josiah's Passover, states that it was a reversion to a practice in the time of the Judges. The element revived by Josiah may have been either the observance of the Passover as a pilgrimage festival at the central shrine with significance for all Israel instead of a merely local festival, or the combination of the Passover and Unleavened Bread, which, of course, would invest the Passover with the significance of a

pilgrimage festival. The only evidence in the Old Testament of the Passover as an element in the cult at the central shrine and combined with the Festival of Unleavened Bread is the present passage, which may be the basis of the statement in 2 Kg. 23.22.

**11. unleavened cakes**, Hebrew *maṣṣôṭ*, were eaten for seven days after the fourteenth day of the first month (Exod. 12.15–20); cf. Lev. 23.6–8, which reckons the eating of the unleavened cakes seven days from the fifteenth of the month. The apparent discrepancy may be explained by the fact that in ancient Hebrew reckoning a day began at sunset. This abstaining from a regular element in the staple diet is a rite of separation associated with the transitional period between growth and harvest and with the rite of desacralization of the new crop, so that it might be safely used by the community. For P elements in the passage and the possible reference to parching as a rite of desacralization see Introduction to chapter 5, p. 70. As in the case of the Passover, if this passage had been no more than a redactional note from P we should have had much more detail. In accordance with Exod. 12.15–20 and Lev. 23.6–8, P would have specified a seven-day rite.

**on the fourteenth day of the month at evening**: cf. Exod. 12.6, P. If the passage in Joshua had been wholly from P we should have expected the month to be specified (see introduction to chapter 5).

**produce**, Hebrew *‘aḇûr*, occurs only here and at verse 12 in the Old Testament, but it is well attested in its Akkadian and Syriac cognates.

**parched corn**: on parching as a rite of desacralization of the new grain, see Introduction to chapter 5, p. 70. Parched corn was a regular diet (Ru. 2.14; 1 Sam. 17.17 and Lev. 23.14).

**12. manna**: cf. Exod. 16.35 (JE); the secretion of plant-lice on desert bushes, valued by the Bedouin for its sugar content, in which their diet is markedly deficient. Thus the Deuteronomic historian emphasizes the transition from the desert to the Promised Land.

**13. before him**: possible, or ‘opposite’, or ‘at some distance’ (Ps. 10.5, 38.11, M.T. 12).

**14. the army of the LORD**: cf. 1 Kg. 22.19, the heavenly court. In accordance with the conception of Yahweh militant in the cause of Israel his angelic attendants are depicted as an army. The conception of the stars as ‘the heavenly host’ (Gen. 2.1, P) is as early as the Deuteronomic history (2 Kg. 21.5, 23.4–5, etc.), but probably the idea of the army of the Lord was a projection of the conception of Yahweh militant as peculiarly manifest in the Ark and the sacral community in arms (cf. G. von Rad, *Theology of the Old Testament*, I, 1962, pp. 18–19).

**I have now come**: the Hebrew formula (*‘attāh ḥā’î*) is familiar in the epistolary style, where it introduces the substance of the message after preliminaries. Here, then, it suggests a fresh statement, the real purpose of the theophany. This, however, is abruptly supplanted by the description of Joshua’s reaction and the revelation of the sanctity of the place, which surely indicates the fragmentary nature of the tradition (see further, Introduction to chapter 5, p. 72).



**6** Now Jericho was shut up from within and from without because of the people of Israel; none went out, and none came in. <sup>2</sup>And the LORD said to Joshua, 'See, I have given into your hand Jericho, with its king and mighty men of valour.' <sup>3</sup> You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall

**15. Put off your shoes . . .** as in Exod. 3.5 this indicates the revelation of the sanctity of the place, sanctuaries being entered barefoot (Exod. 29.20, P) as still among the Samaritans at Nāblus and the Moslems.

#### THE FALL OF JERICHO 6.1-27

The incident, like so much in Jos. 2-6, is described in duplicate, first in the divine instructions and then in the event, certain details being communicated in triplicate, Joshua transmitting the divine command. This has a mnemonic value, perhaps being instructions for ritual celebration. The episode is introduced by a note on the fortification of Jericho, alert and in a state of siege, which might well defy semi-nomads, who lacked the experience or the temperament to reduce such a place.

What was once a strikingly dramatic narrative in the pre-Deuteronomic compilation is ruined by continual accretions, to the bewilderment of the reader and even the critic. According to one version the people marched round the city on the decisive seventh day in silence until at the seventh circuit on the word of command they raised a shout (verses 5, 10, 16, 20), at which the wall fell down in its place (verse 20), while according to another account the march round the city was accompanied by the priests with horns blowing possibly at each daily circuit and certainly during the seven circuits on the seventh day (verse 4). Verse 11 may even indicate yet another tradition in which the Ark alone was carried round the city by its bearers. In verse 5 the priests blow their horns apparently only on the seventh day, but according to verses 8, 9, 13 they blow the horns during the whole march round. In the march round the city the warriors only are mentioned in verses 3 and 7, priests and the Ark being introduced, apparently as a later accretion, in verse 4. They were inserted here, no doubt, with respect to Joshua's instructions to the priests with the Ark in verse 6 (obviously a later version than his instructions to the people in verse 3). The variants, however, are dovetailed in the course of composition and redaction till they cannot be separated with certainty.

With this reserve we may propose a secular and a sacred tradition. The former, which represents a march round the city by the warriors in arms in silence till they raise the shout at the given signal, when the walls collapse and the city is taken and put under the ban, is probably the tribal tradition of Benjamin. This may reflect the astonishment of the tribe, probably among the last to settle in Palestine, at finding such a site as Jericho by its strong spring and with ample evidence of its

you do for six days. <sup>4</sup>And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark; and on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, the priests blowing the trumpets. <sup>5</sup>And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, as soon as you hear

former strength virtually an open town, if not actually derelict. Here we recall Miss Kenyon's tentative dating of the fall of Late Bronze Age Jericho c. 1350-1325 B.C. This version would then be an aetiological saga. The tradition of the ban on Jericho (verses 16, 17, 21, 24), if not part of this account, may be part of a historical tradition of an earlier hostile penetration by Reuben and Gad, as is suggested by the seniority of Reuben and the association of the tribe with the Stone of Bohan, the son of Reuben, south of Jericho (15.6, 18.17), and perhaps by the tradition of these elements in the van of Israel in the passing of the Jordan (11.12-18). This tradition would also be conserved at Gilgal, which was probably the boundary-shrine of the Transjordan tribes and Benjamin west of Jordan long before it became the central sanctuary of all Israel.

The role of the priests with the Ark and the horns and the daily procession round the city, culminating in the sevenfold circuit on the seventh day, has every appearance of an aetiological account of a ritual, like the crossing of the Jordan, where the priests with the Ark play a similar role. This was no doubt part of the ritual of the sacrament of the occupation of the Promised Land at the sanctuary at Gilgal about three miles north-east of Jericho. This may be indicated in the note that after the daily circumambulation the people returned to the camp for the night (verse 11b), the 'camp' being the conventional description of the temporary lodging of the pilgrims to the central shrine. It is tempting to see in the sevenfold procession culminating in the sevenfold circumambulation and in the use of the ram's horn trumpet (*yōḥēl*), a reflection of the ritual of the Jubilee Year, when there was a reversion of land to its owners, and which was inaugurated by the blowing of the *yōḥēl* (hence the name). Details of the Jubilee Year are from P (Lev. 25.1-55), but like so much else of the ritual in P, it may have had a much earlier history.

The mention of the ban on Jericho in verses 17 and 24 suggests to the pre-Deuteronomic compiler of the sundry traditions the preservation of Rahab (verses 17, 23, 25) and, in anticipation, the incident of Achan (verse 18).

Both the secular and the sacred traditions of the fall of Jericho served the purpose of the Deuteronomic historian in emphasizing the divine agency in the occupation of Canaan.

**1. shut up from within and from without:** lit. 'shutting in and shut'.

**2. I have given:** prophetic, or declaratory perfect, used of the divine promise, which is considered effective when it is resolved upon. This is probably from the oracle in the tradition of the Holy War (so Noth, *Das Buch Josua*, 2nd ed., 1953, p. 137). **and mighty men of valour:** actually without the conjunction in the



the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up every man straight before him.' <sup>6</sup> So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, 'Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.' <sup>7</sup> And he said to the people, 'Go forward; march around the city, and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD.'

8 And as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD following them. <sup>9</sup> And the armed men went before the priests

Hebrew, which indicates that perhaps this is a gloss on 'men of war' in verse 3, displaced from the margin.

**4. seven:** the number had a magical significance in the ancient Near East and generally in popular religion and superstition. It is also a motif of folklore and saga. In the present context it may reflect the sacramental celebration of the fall of Jericho in the cult at Gilgal, but it could as well be a feature of secular saga. The secondary nature of the tradition is indicated by the premature introduction of the facts formally communicated by Joshua in verse 6.

**trumpets of rams' horns:** (Hebrew *šōp' rōt hay-yôb' lîm*). The ram's horn was either *yôb'el* or *keren hay-yôb'el*. *šōpār* is here equated with the ram's horn. The word may be connected with the Assyrian *šapparu*, a kind of wild goat or sheep; cf. Arabic *sawāfir*, wild sheep.

**5.** The verse shows evidence of the fusion of the tradition of the final shout of the people after their silent circumambulation at the signal of a long-drawn blast on the ram's horn and the later version of the procession in which the priests blow the horns.

**flat:** Hebrew 'in its place'.

**7. and he said:** correctly with the Syriac version, the Targum and the Vulgate for M.T. 'and they said'.

**the ark of the LORD:** from the pre-Deuteronomic tradition, as distinct from 'the ark of the covenant of the Lord'. The mention of the Ark here after the warriors indicates a fusion of the secular and sacred traditions, and occasions further literary adjustment of the two traditions in the arrangement of the procession in verse 9.

**9. armed men:** Hebrew *he-ḥālūs*, collective singular, either 'girt up' or 'kilted up' and free for action (cf. 4.13). Hertzberg (op. cit., p. 41n.) aptly cites the use of the term for young pioneers in the Zionist settlement of Palestine.



who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually.<sup>10</sup> But Joshua commanded the people, 'You shall not shout or let your voice be heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then you shall shout.'<sup>11</sup> So he caused the ark of the LORD to compass the city, going about it once; and they came into the camp, and spent the night in the camp.

<sup>12</sup> Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. <sup>13</sup> And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD passed on, blowing the trumpets continually; and the armed men went before them, and the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets blew continually. <sup>14</sup> And the second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did for six days.

<sup>15</sup> On the seventh day they rose early at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times: it was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. <sup>16</sup> And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, 'Shout; for the LORD has given you the city. <sup>17</sup> And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers that we

**rear guard:** lit. 'that which gathers up' (cf. Num. 10.25; Isa. 52.12).

**13. blowing the trumpets continually:** reading *hālōk w'ṭākōā* for M.T. *hālōk w'ṭāk'ū*.

**17. devoted to the LORD for destruction:** Hebrew *hērem*, lit. 'sacrosanct', which has an Arabic cognate, e.g. *haram*, 'sacred precinct of a holy place', *ḥarīm*, 'women', as sacrosanct to the husband. The Hebrew term signifies what is renounced to God either in consequence of a vow or of a divine command in the holy war (1 Sam. 15.3ff.). The institution is described somewhat ideally in Dt. 20.16-17, but it was an actual practice in the ancient Semitic world, being attested in the inscription of Mesha of Moab in the second half of the 9th century, where it involved the slaughter of all the 7,000 inhabitants of the Israelite town of Moab and the appropriation of the cult equipment of Yahweh for Chemosh, the god of Moab (G. A. Cooke, *NSI*, no. 1, ll. 17-18) (cf. verse 19). In the context of the holy war the explanation of this wanton and wasteful institution may be that as the warriors and their weapons were dedicated to God (1 Sam. 21.5; 2 Sam. 11.11)

sent. <sup>18</sup> But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction, and bring trouble upon it. <sup>19</sup> But all silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are sacred to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD.' <sup>20</sup> So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people raised a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. <sup>21</sup> Then they utterly destroyed all in the city, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and asses, with the edge of the sword.

<sup>22</sup> And Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, 'Go into the harlot's house, and bring out from it the woman, and all who belong to her, as you swore to her.' <sup>23</sup> So the young men who had been spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her; and they brought all her kindred, and set them outside the camp of Israel. <sup>24</sup> And they

all with which they came into contact, including the spoils of the captured city, would be 'contaminated' by their 'holiness', hence unsafe for common use.

**18. keep yourselves:** so with the versions for M.T. 'keep'.

**lest when you have devoted them:** read with LXX (cf. 7.21, Dt. 7.25) 'lest you appropriate them' (*pen taḥm'ḏû* for M.T. *pen taḥ'a'rîmû*). The verb *ḥāmad* means 'to covet', but also, as the Karatepe inscription indicates, 'to appropriate', which is probably the meaning in the Decalogue (Exod. 20.17; cf. verse 15, regarding kidnapping), and certainly in Exod. 34.24.

**trouble:** from Hebrew *'ākar*, with which the Valley of Achor is connected in popular etymology (7.24, 26), might be better rendered 'vitate' (cf. Gen. 34.30; 1 Kg. 18.17). The Arabic cognate denotes the pollution of water by mud.

**19. sacred to the LORD:** Hebrew *kōdeš*. Denoting an exclusive ritual relationship with God, the moral connotation being secondary and later.

**the treasury of the LORD:** see above, on verse 17; cf. David's consecrated spoils (1 Kg. 7.51) and probably the armour of Saul deposited by the Philistines in the temple of Ashtaroth, probably at Bethshan (1 Sam. 31.10). See further verse 24, where the deposit in 'the house' of Yahweh is probably a later anachronistic expansion, as indicated by its omission in LXX.

**21. utterly destroyed:** Hebrew, put to the ban, as prescribed in verse 17.

burned the city with fire, and all within it; only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. <sup>25</sup> But Rahab the harlot, and her father's household, and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive; and she dwelt in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26 Joshua laid an oath upon them at that time, saying, 'Cursed before the LORD be the man that rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho.

At the cost of his first-born shall he lay its foundation,  
and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates.'

27 So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was in all the land.

**7** But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things; for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things; and the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel.

**26. laid an oath upon them:** M.T. requires the direct object. Better, with a change of vowels, 'swore an oath'.

**Jericho:** probably a gloss, as indicated by its omission in LXX.

**Cursed:** Hebrew 'ārār, the Akkadian cognate of which means 'bound' physically or by incantation, the form the curse often takes in Hebrew. The curse in ancient Israel was thought to operate automatically, and was effective on all associated with the person cursed; cf. *per contra* the blessing, e.g. on Jacob (Gen. 27.27ff.) (cf. J. Gray, 'Blessing and Curse', *HDB*, one volume, 2nd ed., 1963). The curse is said to be fulfilled on Hiel of Bethel (1 Kg. 16.34), as LXX here adds, but with a different name. The fact that the passage does not visualize this indicates a date before the reign of Ahab. There was actually a small settlement at Jericho in the interim, as revealed by Miss Kenyon's excavations, but this was not extensive, nor probably heavily fortified.

**27.** On the conclusion, which signifies the pre-Deuteronomic narrative, see Introduction, pp. 20f.

#### THE INCIDENT OF ACHAN 7.1-26 (see also 8.1-29)

Here the pre-Deuteronomic compiler of the local traditions of Benjamin and Gilgal has combined two independent tradition-complexes, that of the campaign of Ai, where the historical tradition is combined with an aetiological tradition concerning the name ('the Ruin'), and the aetiological tradition of the sin and punishment of



Achan, which primarily explained the significance of the stone heap near the plain of Achor (7.26). Apart from the location of the plain of Achor in Judah (15.7), the fact that Achan belonged to a sept of Judah (7.18) may indicate that this was a tradition of Judah, particularly of the Zerahites, the sept to which Achan belonged (7.17), through whom it may have been associated with Gilgal in the Jordan valley, with which the inhabitants of the plain of Achor had a natural connection. On the other hand, in view of the discredit on a clan of Judah, it may have been a tradition of the neighbouring tribe of Benjamin, who were familiar with the cairn as a boundary-point. However this may be, the tradition was originally distinct from those of the Ai campaign, which were located probably along the comparatively open Wādī Makkūk due west of ancient Jericho, hence well north of the northern end of el-Buqei'a, the plain, not valley, of Achor (7.26, 15.7). The instance of God's anger provoked by the sin of Achan in the original Achan tradition was probably other than the reverse at Ai, in favour of which it has been suppressed in the pre-Deuteronomic compilation (Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 45; Hertzberg, *op. cit.*, p. 50).

In the pre-Deuteronomic compilation the infringement of the tabu by Achan at Jericho (7.11a-26) is associated with the reverse in the first attack in an obviously artificial way, verses 5b-10 being the work of the pre-Deuteronomic compiler, as is indicated by the fact that in the independent Ai tradition the reason for the reverse is already given as over-confidence and miscalculation (verses 3-5a).

The main impression of the Ai incident is also of an aetiological tradition, explaining the name and condition of the place and various features in the vicinity, such as the large heap of stones at the gate, which was explained as the place where the body of the king was thrown out (8.29) and a certain conspicuous tree as that where he was hanged (8.29). The details of the local contours in relation to the campaign (esp. 8.3ff.) suggest to Noth a tradition which comes from the time when the citadel area of the ruined city, ruined since c. 2000 B.C., was re-occupied by a limited settlement of Benjaminites from the 12th century to the end of the 10th century, as the excavations of the late Mme J. Marquet-Krause have demonstrated (*Les Fouilles de 'Ai (et-Tell)*, 1933-35, 1939). Noth's explanation of the detailed knowledge of local topography, however, is not the only one. Ai was just over a mile from Bethel and may well have played a part in the tradition of the occupation of the Promised Land at Bethel, when it was a central shrine (Jg. 20.26-28), just as the traditions of the crossing of Jordan, the taking of Jericho, and the Achan incident were conserved in connection with the tradition of the occupation at the shrine of Gilgal (Hertzberg, *op. cit.*, p. 60). Ai, however, was on the main road taken by pilgrims from the hill-country of Ephraim to Gilgal (Alt, 'Josua', KS I, 1953, p. 183), and nothing was more natural than that its ruin and features in the vicinity should be connected with the cult-legend of the shrine of Gilgal, the occupation of the Promised Land, by older pilgrims for the edification of their younger colleagues and families in the fashion of pilgrims through the ages and according to the principle of instructing the young, who shall enquire 'What mean these stones?' The closer association of the Ai tradition with the cult at nearby

Bethel when it was a central shrine and with the pilgrimage to Gilgal may explain the two variants, apparent particularly in the numbers of the men in ambush (30,000 according to 8.3-4; cf. 5,000 according to 8.12). A further possible explanation of this double tradition is that a genuine historical tradition of the defeat of the men of Bethel at the ruined site of Ai by the men of Joseph (cf. Jg. 1.22-26), conserved by them as a secular tribal tradition, was combined with an accretion of traditions developed in connection with the cult of Bethel and the pilgrimage to Gilgal. Noth, on the other hand, has contended for two stages of development of the Ai tradition, the first associated with the Benjaminitic settlement of Ai from the 12th to the late 10th centuries, which conserved the significance of particular local features, and the second after that settlement, which knew Ai as 'for ever a heap of ruins to this day' (8.28). Among these various possible explanations of the variant traditions of the Ai incident it is not possible to dogmatize, though obviously Noth is right in dating the tradition of the perpetual desolation of Ai after the abandonment of the place in the latter half of the 10th century.

In the pre-Deuteronomistic compilation the calculating reconnaissance and subsequent rash attack without specific divine direction, and the discomfiture contrasts with the divinely directed crossing of the Jordan, on which the compiler animadverts (7.7) in the passage which is recognized as the link he forged between the originally independent traditions of Achan and Ai (verses 5b-11). The contrast with the fall of Jericho is also striking. By contrast the successful phase of the campaign against Ai is heralded by the Lord's direct command and assurance in the declaratory perfect 'See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai' (8.1). This language recalls that of the tradition of the fall of Jericho: 'See, I have given into your hand Jericho, with its king and mighty men of valour' (6.2). The stereotyped phraseology suggests a regular literary type, the oracle in the holy war of the invincible God, the theme of the cult-legend of the central shrine as transmitted by the pre-Deuteronomistic compiler. He was also responsible for the explanation of the initial reverse at Ai as the result of Achan's breach of the tabu at Jericho. The explanation of the first failure as the result of a miscalculation of the opposition (7.3-4) belongs to the independent Ai tradition, perhaps that variant which, we have suggested, may be the secular tribal tradition of the Josephite penetration.

The Achan story, probably originally quite a trivial aetiological tradition relating to the cairn between Judah and Benjamin, dominating the plain of Achor (el-Buqei'a) from the north-west (Jos. 15.7, 18.17), once it was associated by the pre-Deuteronomistic compiler with the ban on Jericho, pointedly illustrates the conception of the occupation of the Promised Land as God's conditional grace to Israel. This reflects the association of the Drama of Salvation and the Covenant, with its moral and ritual obligations expressed in the Decalogue with its historical prelude, and more pointedly stated in Dt. 27-28, which was familiar in the cult at the amphictyonic sanctuaries in the time of the Judges. Hence we may understand the emphasis laid on Achan's breach of the ban at Jericho as a breach of the Covenant (verses 11, 15). This was a tradition which the Deuteronomistic historian

2 Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-a'ven, east of Bethel, and said to them, 'Go up and spy out the land.' And the men went up and spied out Ai.<sup>3</sup> And they returned to Joshua, and said to him, 'Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai; do not make the whole people toil up there, for they are but few.'<sup>4</sup> So about three thousand went

could cordially take over from his predecessor, who combined the various independent traditions about Gilgal and set upon them the impress of the historical faith of Israel as expressed in the assemblies of the sacral confederacy at that shrine.

**1. broke faith:** the verb *mā'al*, being confined to the late parts of the Old Testament, particularly P, may indicate a redactional gloss, and this is supported by the proleptic character of the verse, which violates the essentially dramatic construction of the pre-Deuteronomic narrative.

**Achan:** modified to *Achar* in LXX in assimilation to Achor. On the paronomasia see on verse 25. In the genealogy of the clans of Judah in 1 Chr. 2.7 Achar (*sic*) is probably a clan of Judah rather than an individual, inter-tribal affinities being generally described as individual relationships, as among Bedouin tribes still. The association with Zerah the brother of Perez (Gen. 38.29, 30) is interesting in view of the association of Perez with Bethlehem (Ru. 4.12, 18), with which the inhabitants of el-Buqei'a (the Plain of Achor) have their association in the settled land.

**2. Ai:** this place, actually *hā-'ai* ('the Ruin'), undoubtedly modern et-Tell, meaning also 'the Ruined Mound', c. 1½ miles SE. (cf. verse 2 'east') of Bethel cut off on the north by a deep ravine (8.11) and bounded on the west by an open valley (8.13). Two modern village tracks run east and west of the ridge on which Ai stood, to meet in more open country south-east of the ridge, 'the descent' (better 'meeting-place') 'toward the Arabah' (8.14), from which the easiest access from Jericho is by way of the Wādī Makkūk. The valley on the east and its northern extension may be the place where Joshua sent his main advance force (8.13), himself remaining with apparently his main force where he could control both approaches east and west of the ridge. The excavation of the site between 1933 and 1935 revealed a great settlement in the Early Bronze Age, which was destroyed c. 2000 B.C. and not re-occupied except partially as an open village about the site of the old citadel from the 12th to the late 10th centuries, obviously in an early stage of the settlement of Benjamin. On the relation of these data to the composite narrative of chapters 7 and 8, see introduction to chapters 7-8, and on their relevance to the date of the Hebrew settlement, see General Introduction, p. 35. **Bethaven** ('Shrine of Vanity') is probably the familiar Jewish parody of Bethel, in which case either 'which is near Bethaven' or 'east of Bethel' is a late gloss.

**3. about two or three thousand:** in view of the statement that the people are but few, Eissfeldt is surely right in assuming a scribal error for 'three



up there from the people; and they fled before the men of Ai,<sup>5</sup> and the men of Ai killed about thirty-six men of them, and chased them before the gate as far as Sheb'arim, and slew them at the descent. And the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

6 Then Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust upon their heads. 7 And Joshua said, 'Alas,

hundred', which is more in accordance with the casualties 'about thirty-six men' (verse 5).

**5. Shebarim:** lit. 'breakings', probably 'quarries', like 'the descent', a precipitous part of the valley east of Ai, a local feature, indicating the intense elaboration of the local tradition.

**the hearts of the people melted:** 'heart' in Hebrew idiom means thought or resolution. The Israelites in their attack on Ai on their own initiative suffer the same experience as the Canaanites when God directed Israel in the occupation of the Promised Land (2.9).

**6. rent his clothes:** a mourning rite, e.g. of Jacob for Joseph (Gen. 37.34), David for Absalom (2 Sam. 13.31), etc. This is probably the modification of the laceration of the skin (Dt. 14.1) now attested as a rite of mourning for the dead in the Rās Shamra texts.

**and the elders of Israel:** the pre-Deuteronomistic compiler represents the reverse as affecting all Israel, hence Joshua's association with the elders and the rite **before the ark of the LORD**. This is the only reference to the Ark in this incident, significantly occurring in the section from the pre-Deuteronomistic compiler, which suggests that the earlier independent tradition of the Ai incident in the variant to which verses 2-5a belong was a secular tradition of a limited number of the Hebrews, perhaps the Joseph-group (see introduction to chapters 7-8).

**dust upon their heads:** this is also attested as a rite of mourning for the dead in the Rās Shamra texts, as indicative of the suspension of normal behaviour and appearance in the transitional period experienced by the community at the death of one of its members. Those rites came to have the general significance of normal humiliation in the fast.

**7. why hast thou brought this people over the Jordan . . . ?** this points the contrast between Israel's triumph under divine leadership, the theme of the cult-legend at Gilgal, and her present reverse on her own initiative. It reflects further the paradox of Israel's sacramental experience of the grace of God Almighty in the Drama of Salvation and the Occupation of the Promised Land and her political reverses during the settlement and later.

**Amorites:** perhaps specific here, referring to the inhabitants of the hills (Num. 13.29). On Amorites and **Canaanites** (verse 9), see further on 3.10.

O LORD GOD, why hast thou brought this people over the Jordan at all, to give us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan! <sup>8</sup> O LORD, what can I say, when Israel has turned their backs before their enemies! <sup>9</sup> For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and will surround us, and cut off our name from the earth, and what wilt thou do for thy great name?

<sup>10</sup> The LORD said to Joshua, 'Arise, why have you thus fallen upon your face? <sup>11</sup> Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant which I commanded them; they have taken some of the

**9. our name . . . thy great name:** the implication here is that the name, which often denoted the character and destiny of the bearer, had substance as the extension of the personality (cf. Dt. 7.24, 9.14; Isa. 55.13). This is admirably illustrated in the Egyptian Execration Texts, where pottery vessels and figurines were inscribed with the names of various enemies of the Pharaoh in the Twelfth Dynasty and broken or buried with magical ritual and incantation to impair the evil potential of the enemies or to divest them of their personality (K. Sethe, *Die Ächtung feindlicher Fürsten, Völker und Dinge auf altägyptischen Tongefäßscherben des mittleren Reiches*, 1926; G. Posener, *Princes et Pays d'Asie et de Nubie, Textes Hiéroglyphiques sur des Figurines d'Envoûtement du Moyen Empire*, 1939). In the Deuteronomic theology the name of God often signifies his presence, which may be realized in time or place, e.g. in the Temple (Dt. 12.11; 1 Kg. 8.29). This extension of the divine personality is what Christian theology terms a person of the Godhead. In this passage, however, **what wilt thou do for thy great name?** may mean 'What of thy reputation?' But it may visualize the impairing of God and his being deprived of his people among whom he was invoked by name and his presence thus realized. For the identification of the interests of Israel with the honour of God, cf. Dt. 9.28.

**10-12.** The pre-Deuteronomic compiler completes the transition from the reverse at Ai to the Achan story, with the stimulating thought that man cannot remain prostrate under the stroke of disaster, but must seek the moral cause of it in his own conduct. This anticipates the attitude of the Deuteronomic historian, and is characteristic evidence of the moral fibre of Israel.

**11.** Achan's sin is Israel's by the old Semitic principle of corporate personality. It is emphasized that this sin is no case of unwitting infringement of ritual, which **sinned** (*hātā*) might signify, but deliberate sin, which is violation of the covenant obligations solemnly laid upon Israel with adjurations. The appropriation of the banned property was sacrilege and was aggravated by deceit and dissembling.

devoted things; they have stolen, and lied, and put them among their own stuff.<sup>12</sup> Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become a thing for destruction. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you.<sup>13</sup> Up, sanctify the people, and say, "Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the LORD, God of Israel, 'There are devoted things in the midst of you, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies, until you take away the devoted things from among you.'<sup>14</sup> In the morning therefore you shall be brought near by your tribes; and the tribe which the LORD takes shall come near by families; and the family which the LORD takes shall come near by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall come near man by man.<sup>15</sup> And he who is taken with the devoted things shall be burned with fire, he

**12. backs:** actually 'back of the neck'.

**a thing for destruction:** under the infectious influence of the banned property which they held. Sacrilege may be a moral fault, but for the ancient Israelite it effected automatic retribution.

**13. sanctify:** condition by ceremonial purification for a sacred transaction, namely the divine arbitration by the casting of the sacred lots (cf. 3.5 and note). **the LORD, God of Israel:** Yahweh the God of Israel was probably the specific title of God in the assembly of all Israel.

**14. brought near:** i.e. into the presence of God, symbolized by the Ark or at the sanctuary for divine arbitration, as in Exod. 22.8, where the same verb is used. **takes:** cf. 1 Sam. 14.41ff., which gives the fullest information on the manipulation of the sacred lots Urim and Thummim. These were apparently shaken as in the Roman manipulation of lots until one 'went out', clearing the party represented. That which was 'contained' or 'taken' (Hebrew *nilkād*) was the guilty party. The process was continued by elimination (verses 16-18), here by tribes (*šēbātīm*), Judah, etc.; septs (*mišpāhōt*), Zarhi, etc.; smaller kinship groups (*bāttīm*), Zabdi, etc.; by houses under fathers of families, Carmi, etc.; then by individual heads of families under the authority of their father or oldest member, so arriving at Achan. Lots as the means of divine arbitration were well known in antiquity in Israel, Mesopotamia, and Arabia, in classical antiquity, and even in the early Church (Ac. 1.26).

**15. burned:** the method of utter extinction (Am. 2.1), the penalty of adultery in certain cases (Gen. 38.24; Lev. 20.14, 21.9). This need not exclude stoning in the case of Achan, a rite in which all the community might participate (verse 25; cf. Dt. 17.5, 22.21), though the stoning here was demanded as the explanation of



and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a shameful thing in Israel.”

16 So Joshua rose early in the morning, and brought Israel near tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was taken;<sup>17</sup> and he brought near the families of Judah, and the family of the Zer'ahites was taken; and he brought near the family of the Zer'ahites man by man, and Zabdi was taken;<sup>18</sup> and he brought near his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.<sup>19</sup> Then Joshua said to Achan, 'My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and render praise to him; and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.'<sup>20</sup> And Achan answered Joshua, 'Of a truth I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I did:<sup>21</sup> when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle

the cairn associated with Achan in the plain of Achor, and by its mention both before and after the burning in verse 25 seems a variant tradition.

**a shameful thing:** cf. Gen. 34.7; Dt. 22.21 (adultery); Jg. 20.6 (rape). From its recurrence, 'a shameful thing in Israel' (*n'ḥālāh b'yisrā'el*) is a technical term, but *n'ḥālāh* is also used generally of the presumptuous contention of Job (Job 42.8) and of thoughtless speech (Isa. 9.17, M.T. 16). The classical example of one *nāḥāl* by name and nature is Nabal (1 Sam. 25.25), who could not govern his indignation by discretion. This lack of control or wilful failure to govern one's temper, desire, or whim is *n'ḥālāh* in the Old Testament. *N'ḥālāh b'yisrā'el* denotes indulgence of one's personal desires or impulses in defiance of the standards and sanctions of the community.

**17. families:** correctly with some ancient mss. for M.T. 'family'.

**was taken:** correctly with LXX, Syriac and Targum for M.T. 'he took'.

**19. give glory:** Hebrew *kābôd*, lit. 'weight', the opposite of *ḥālālāh*, lit. 'lightness', also 'curse', the natural reaction of a condemned man.

**the LORD God of Israel:** Yahweh's formal title in the cult at the assembly of the sacral community of all Israel.

**render praise:** i.e. for the vindication of God's justice and omniscience revealed by the sacred lots. The phrase reflects the solidarity of the ancient society. As the sinner had involved the community in sin and so impaired its effectiveness he was now required to give it the advantage of his auspicious word as by his punishment he delivered it from sin.

**21. mantle from Shinar:** Shinar is Mesopotamia in Gen. 10.10, where it denotes Sumer, South Mesopotamia. Nothing is known of any such special product associated with Mesopotamia, but the inventories from the palace of Rās Shamra

from Shinar, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, then I coveted them, and took them; and behold, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath.'

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath.<sup>23</sup> And they took them out of the tent and brought them to Joshua and all the people of Israel; and they laid them down before the LORD.<sup>24</sup> And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the mantle and the bar of gold, and his sons and daughters, and his oxen and asses and sheep, and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought

mention vestments trimmed with jewels, some of which are valued at ten shekels of silver (C. Virolleaud, *Le Palais Royal d'Ugarit* II, 1957, pp. 137ff.). The mantle taken by Achan may have been, like those, for ceremonial or cultic purposes (cf. 2 Kg. 23.7). The recurrence of the term š'r in the Rās Shamra inventories, however, meaning 'wool', may indicate that *n* in šin'ār is a scribal error.

**two hundred shekels of silver:** the shekel here is a weight, coinage being introduced from the mercantile cities of Asia Minor in the 7th century, though shekel pieces, probably metal rings of that weight told off on a stick, are mentioned in the Rās Shamra legends (14th century). There were two systems of weight in use in Palestine: the Babylonian, of 3,600 shekels to the talent, and the Canaanite, attested at Rās Shamra of 3,000 shekels to the talent (e.g. Exod. 38.25-26, P). Comparison of ancient weights found in excavations in Mesopotamia and Palestine suggests that the talent in pre-exilic Palestine contained 2,500 shekels. This may be the biblical shekel 'after the king's weight' (2 Sam. 14.26) as distinct from 'the shekel of the sanctuary'. See further, R. B. Y. Scott, 'Weights, Measures, Money and Time', *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, edited by M. Black and H. H. Rowley, 1962, p. 38.

**a bar of gold:** lit. 'a tongue'.

**coveted:** desired and appropriated (see on 6.18).

**23. laid them down:** lit. 'poured them out', visualizing the shekel weights, but possibly we should read with LXX and the Syriac version 'set them down', reading *wayyaššigūm* for M.T. *wayyaššikūm*.

**24.** This is a classic example of the solidarity of the community. As Achan's breach of the tabu involved all Israel in sin and disability his punishment involved his family and all that belonged to him, including his 'house', or **tent**, which may be thus personified among the modern Bedouin (J. B. Glubb, *The Story of the Arab Legion*, 1948, p. 137). This principle of communal responsibility underlies



them up to the Valley of Achor. <sup>25</sup>And Joshua said, 'Why did you bring trouble on us? The LORD brings trouble on you today.' And all Israel stoned him with stones; they burned them with fire, and stoned them with stones. <sup>26</sup>And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day; then the LORD turned from his burning anger. Therefore to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor.

**8** And the LORD said to Joshua, 'Do not fear or be dismayed; take all the fighting men with you, and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and his people, his city, and his

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the clause in the Decalogue 'visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children . . .' (Exod. 20.5), and operates in the law of blood-revenge among the Bedouin. It may be a defective ethic, but practically is a wholesome deterrent. Its operation to comparatively late in the history of Israel is indicated by its particular modification in Dt. 24.16.

**Valley of Achor:** Hebrew 'ēmek, lit. deepening, indicates perhaps the soil of the valley bottom rather than the depression of the contour, and is used of open cultivable valleys like Jezreel, Elah, and Hebron as distinct from the torrent bed (*nahal*) and ravine (*gay*). The description of the tribal boundary of Judah in 15.7 indicates that the plain of Achor must lie south of the Wādī Qilt, with which it is occasionally identified. Noth is right in identifying it with el-Buqei'a, the upland plain cultivable in a season of good rainfall west of the cliffs above Qumrān, which gives access from the lower Jordan valley to Bethlehem. It was one of those regions which serve Bedouin as a stepping-stone in their penetration to more desirable land, as in the case of the Ta'amara, who have now penetrated to Bethlehem and Tekoa, but still have an interest in the Buqei'a.

**25. bring trouble:** from Hebrew 'ākar, a word-play on Achor. The verb means 'to vitiate'; cf. the Arabic cognate, 'to pollute with mud'. The rhythm of Joshua's reply to Achan may indicate a metric couplet, the proper name standing before 'Why did you bring trouble upon us?', with a further word-play between Achan, 'ākar, and Achor (cf. note on verse 1).

**26. a great heap of stones:** perhaps an actual grave-cairn (Hebrew *bāmāh*, EVV 'high place'), which may have been traditionally associated with an accursed person, on whose grave passers-by cast stones, as they did until recently at the reputed tomb of Absalom in the Kidron valley at Jerusalem. Alternatively this cairn, traditionally associated with Achan, may have been a boundary cairn between Judah and Benjamin (cf. 15.7).



land; <sup>2</sup> and you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king; only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves; lay an ambush against the city, behind it.'

3 So Joshua arose, and all the fighting men, to go up to Ai; and Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them forth by night. <sup>4</sup>And he commanded them, 'Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind it; do not go very far from the city, but hold yourselves all in readiness; <sup>5</sup> and I, and all the people who are with me, will approach the city. And when they come out against us, as before, we shall flee before them; <sup>6</sup> and they will come out after us, till we have drawn them away from the city; for they will say, "They are fleeing from us, as before." So we will flee from them; <sup>7</sup> then you shall rise up from the ambush, and seize the city; for the LORD your God will give it into your hand. <sup>8</sup>And when you have taken the city, you shall set the city on fire, doing as the LORD has bidden; see, I have commanded you.' <sup>9</sup> So Joshua sent them forth;

#### THE CAMPAIGN OF AI 8.1-29

**1. Do not fear or be dismayed:** reflecting the phraseology of the Deuteronomic compiler in 1.9, this may be from the same hand.

**I have given:** the perfect of the divine declaration (cf. 6.2), and perhaps the formula of the oracle in the holy war. The pre-Deuteronomic compiler connects the Ai incident with the Jericho campaign for the sake of analogy and contrast.

**2. only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves:** cf. verse 27. This may indicate a note from the Deuteronomic historian, mindful of the modification of the ban in Dt. 2.34ff.; 3.6ff. On the other hand, it may reflect the Benjaminite occupation of Ai from the 12th to the late 10th centuries.

3. There is no reason to suppose that the Israelites were based on Gilgal, about sixteen miles distant, in their attack on Ai. This impression is given by the pre-Deuteronomic compiler, who combined the independent traditions in the first half of Joshua. On the other hand, Saul and Jonathan operated between the neighbourhood of Ai and Gilgal (1 Sam. 13.4ff.).

**thirty thousand:** much too large a number for unobtrusive movement into an ambush, and probably a scribal error for 'three thousand'; cf. 'five thousand' in verse 12.

**4. behind it:** i.e. west of Ai, as verse 9 and the variant tradition in verse 12 say more specifically.

**6. drawn them away:** the same verb is used of the priests' feet drawn out of the muddy bed of Jordan in 4.18.

and they went to the place of ambush, and lay between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai; but Joshua spent that night among the people.

10 And Joshua arose early in the morning and mustered the people, and went up, with the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. 11 And all the fighting men who were with him went up, and drew near before the city, and encamped on the north side of Ai, with a ravine between them and Ai. 12 And he took about five thousand men, and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city. 13 So they stationed the forces, the main encampment which was north of the city and its rear guard west of the city. But Joshua spent that night in the valley. 14 And when the king of Ai saw this he and all his people, the men of the city, made haste and went out early to the descent toward the Arabah to meet Israel in battle; but he did not know that there was an ambush against him behind the city. 15 And Joshua and all Israel made a pretence of being beaten before them, and fled in the direction of the wilderness. 16 So all the people who were in the city were called together to

**9. among the people:** *bā'ām*, perhaps a scribal error for *bā'ēmek*, 'in the plain', agreeing with verse 13. This is the comparatively open valley east and south of the ridge on which Ai stands.

**10.** The fact that Joshua is already said to have gone on his campaign to Ai, where he sets an ambush of 30,000 (probably 3,000) men (verses 3-9), suggests that verse 10, where he again sets an ambush of about 5,000 men (verse 12) in the same position, is from a different source.

**11. all the fighting men** of RSV assumes the emendation of M.T. *kol-hā-ām ham-milḥāmāh*, which is grammatically impossible. *milḥāmāh* should probably be omitted, reading 'all the people'.

**13. the rear guard:** Hebrew *'aḳēḇō*, lit. 'its heel', i.e. pursuers.

**14. the descent toward the Arabah:** better 'the meeting place . . .' (see on 7.2). The Arabah, which denotes the Jordan valley, is still used to describe the depression from the southern end of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of 'Aqaba. The phrase is omitted in LXX, Codices Vaticanus and Alexandrinus, which may indicate a late amplification of the Hebrew text.

**15. the wilderness:** the uncultivated land east of Ai. The land east of the watershed of the hills of South Palestine lies in the rain-shadow, and cultivation deteriorates sharply, being largely abandoned to Bedouin, who hazard a harvest in odd pockets of earth in hope of sufficient rain. Such areas were those first settled by the Hebrews in their penetration.

pursue them, and as they pursued Joshua they were drawn away from the city. <sup>17</sup>There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel, who did not go out after Israel; they left the city open, and pursued Israel.

18 Then the LORD said to Joshua, 'Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai; for I will give it into your hand.' And Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city. <sup>19</sup>And the ambush rose quickly out of their place, and as soon as he had stretched out his hand, they ran and entered the city and took it; and they made haste to set the city on fire. <sup>20</sup>So when the men of Ai looked back, behold, the smoke of the city went up to heaven; and they had no power to flee this way or that, for the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers. <sup>21</sup>And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city went up, then they turned back and smote the men of Ai. <sup>22</sup>And the others came forth from the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on

**17. Bethel:** this may indicate that the action was really associated with the penetration of Joseph (Jg. 1.22-26), of which the destruction of Bethel, attested by archaeology in the late 14th or early 13th centuries, may be evidence. As Ai was derelict at this time, the site may have been chosen by the men of Bethel as a strategic point at which to resist the invaders. This might explain the ease with which the Israelite commandos occupied the site (verse 19).

**18-19. stretched out the javelin:** Hebrew *kīdōn*, for casting, not thrusting as the spear (*h<sup>a</sup>nīṭ*). According to verse 19 this was a signal from Joshua with the main body to the commandos in ambush in the western wādī. This may be according to one tradition, but verse 26, which depicts Joshua as stretching forth the javelin until the victory was complete, obviously treats the act as one of imitative magic, possibly influenced by the tradition of the influence of Moses' upraised hands at the battle of Rephidim (Exod. 17.11, E).

**19. set the city on fire:** Ai being a ruin occupied temporarily by the men of Bethel, the origin of this tradition may be the burning of the equipment of the camp of the men of Bethel. The smoke, rather than Joshua's javelin, was the signal to the main body east of the ridge that the ruse had succeeded.

**20. no power:** Hebrew 'hands', as often, meaning 'power' (Dt. 16.17, 32.36, 34.12; Ps. 76.5, M.T. 6, etc.).

**to flee this way or that:** back to Bethel by the valleys east or west of Ai, where their retreat was cut off by the commandos in control of their camp in the ruins of Ai.



that side; and Israel smote them, until there was left none that survived or escaped. <sup>23</sup> But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

<sup>24</sup> When Israel had finished slaughtering all the inhabitants of Ai in the open wilderness where they pursued them, and all of them to the very last had fallen by the edge of the sword, all Israel returned to Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword. <sup>25</sup> And all who fell that day, both men and women, were twelve thousand, all the people of Ai. <sup>26</sup> For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the javelin, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. <sup>27</sup> Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took as their booty, according to the word of the LORD which he commanded Joshua. <sup>28</sup> So Joshua burned Ai, and made it for ever a heap of ruins, as it is to this day. <sup>29</sup> And he hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening; and at the going down of the sun Joshua commanded, and they took his body down from the tree, and cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raised over it a great heap of stones, which stands there to this day.

<sup>30</sup> Then Joshua built an altar on Mount Ebal to the LORD, the God

**23ff.** Here the tradition of the slaughter of the king of Ai and the inhabitants is an amplification of the historical tradition of the battle of Ai, influenced by the tradition of the ban on Jericho, perhaps by the pilgrims passing that way to the amphictyonic shrine of Gilgal by Jericho. Ai had no king at this time. Local Benjaminite tradition may also have made its contribution, explaining a significant tree as that on which the king was hanged, and a large heap of stones at the gate of the ruined city as the place where his body was thrown. So Arab folk-legend identifies conspicuous rocks at Medain Šālīh in the Northern Hejaz as the petrified bodies of the king and notables of a former settlement.

**27. Only:** the adverb suggests an addition to the existing tradition by the Deuteronomic historian (see on verses 2 and 29b).

**28. heap:** 'ruin-mound', Hebrew *tēl*, Arabic *tell*, hence the modern name et-Tell.

**29. hanged . . . until evening:** after having been killed (10.26; Dt.21.22, 23). The latter passage enjoins the taking down of the body by sunset. This punctilio probably indicates a note by the Deuteronomic compiler.

#### THE BUILDING OF THE ALTAR AND THE COVENANT AT SHECHEM 8.30-35

This passage comes directly from the Deuteronomic historian, as is clear from the

phraseology and the obvious emphasis on such details as the unhewn stones untouched by iron, 'as it is written in the book of the law of Moses' (verse 31; cf. Dt. 27.5-7a; Exod. 20.25), the inscribing of the 'copy of the law of Moses' (verse 32; cf. Dt. 27.2ff., 8), and the Covenant-sacrament in general, though there are differences in detail (verse 33ff.; cf. Dt. 27). This passage seems quite out of the context of the historical course of the occupation of Palestine, even as presented in the schematic account of the pre-Deuteronomistic compiler or the Deuteronomistic historian, coming as it does between the campaign at Ai over twenty miles to the south and the Gibeonite campaign, which is the natural sequel to the battle of Ai. The Deuteronomistic historian seems anxious to represent Joshua as carrying out Moses' instructions for the keeping and proclamation of the law (Dt. 11.29ff., 27.1ff.) to the letter. This passage is his particular amplification of his general theme in Jos. 1.1-9.

The Deuteronomistic historian nevertheless draws here on a genuine ancient tradition, the antiquity of which is clearly indicated by the acknowledgement of Shechem as the legitimate central shrine of all Israel associated with the sacrament of the Covenant, a conception which would certainly not have been invented by the Deuteronomist at a time when he was interested in the centralization of the cult at Jerusalem. The pattern of a public reading or recitation of the law, or at least an epitome of it, such as the Decalogue in its original form or the Twelve Adjurations (Dt. 27.15-26), which recurs in the Deuteronomistic history (Jos. 8.30-35, 24; 2 Kg. 22-23) and also in the older narrative sources of the Pentateuch (Exod. 19.3-8, 24.3, 4a, 7), as demonstrated by K. Baltzer (*Das Bundesformular*, 1960) and W. Beyerlin (*Herkunft und Geschichte der ältesten Sinaitraditionen*, 1961), has a long history and finds its formal prototype in vassal-treaties in documents from the Hittite chancellery at Boghazköi in the 14th and 13th centuries (see General Introduction, pp. 33ff.). There is little doubt then that in Jos. 8.30-35 and 24 the Deuteronomistic historian has preserved in outline the general tradition of the Sacrament of the renewal of the Covenant in the amphictyonic assembly at Shechem, and perhaps even the reminiscence of the first of such sacraments, when the sacral community of the tribes who had already realized their solidarity on the basis of a covenant in the desert mediated their experience to kindred elements already in the land, who were now drawn into the covenant community. It may, in fact, be the same tradition which was elaborated much more fully as the occasion of Joshua's solemn valedictory address in chapter 24. We consider that the role of Joshua as the mediator of the covenant and as the architect of the sacral confederacy of all Israel, which these passages may conserve, suggested to the pre-Deuteronomistic compiler the role of Joshua as *generalissimo* in the Israelite conquest of Palestine.

Hertzberg notes the association of Bethel with Ai (8.17), and makes the interesting suggestion (op. cit., p. 63) that, the Ai incident being associated with the occupation of Bethel by Joseph (Jg. 1.22-26), the tradition of the Covenant at Shechem was an orthodox Deuteronomistic version, emphasizing the significance of

of Israel, <sup>31</sup> as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the people of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, 'an altar of unhewn stones, upon which no man has lifted an iron tool'; and they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed

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the law and the Mosaic tradition at Shechem, which replaced a tradition of the appropriation of Bethel as a cult-centre. Perhaps the transition from Bethel to Shechem, where tradition records the burial of the bones of Joseph (Gen. 50.25; Jos. 24.32), marks the decisive step in the realization of the larger confederacy comprising Joseph and kindred elements in the central highlands, if not all Israel. The position of the incident after the Ai-Bethel campaign, therefore, does correspond to the historical course of events *sed quodam intervallo*; nor do we consider that the Gibeonite incident which follows alters the case, since the campaign against the Amorites about Gibeon may well have been connected with the expansion of Joseph from the north (Alt, 'Josua', KS I, 1953, p. 188 (see further, Introduction to chapters 9-10, pp. 97-99)).

Thus the establishment of Shechem as the central shrine and the sacrament of the Covenant with the endorsement of the law under solemn adjurations, while not invented by the Deuteronomic historian but an old tradition, nevertheless merited the Deuteronomist's emphasis, since his major theme was the operation in the history of Israel of the word of God on this sacramental occasion and endorsed by Israel with solemn adjuration.

**30. Mount Ebal:** north of Shechem opposite Mount Gerizim, which lies south of the town. As in Dt. 27.4 the altar is on Ebal. The Samaritan Pentateuch in both passages places it on Gerizim, still their holy mountain. The question of whether the Samaritans altered the text or whether Jewish orthodox scribes did so in disagreement with the Samaritan sectaries seems to be decided in favour of the latter by the fact that in both orthodox and Samaritan versions at Dt. 11.29 Ebal is associated with the curse and Gerizim with the blessing.

**the LORD, the God of Israel:** the specific title of Yahweh at the central shrine of the sacral confederacy (cf. 7.13, 19).

**31. as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded . . . :** cf. Dt. 27.2-6. The specification of stones undressed by iron tools is explicitly noted by the Deuteronomist after Dt. 27.5-6, though it is an old ordinance, being included in the Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20.25).

**iron:** until c. 1200 B.C. worked by subjects of the Hittites in Anatolia and in the state of Mitanni, who had also subjects from Anatolia, and jealously guarded as a monopoly; hence the prejudice against its use in cultic installations as the product of an alien smith caste, who through it might have put a curse upon the installations (cf. 5.2).

**burnt offerings:** ('*ôlôt*'), in which the whole victim was burnt in homage to God,



peace offerings. <sup>32</sup>And there, in the presence of the people of Israel, he wrote upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. <sup>33</sup>And all Israel, sojourner as well as homeborn, with their elders and officers and their judges, stood on opposite sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, half of them in front of Mount Geri'zim and half of them

as distinct from communion-offerings (Hebrew *š' lāmim*, RSV 'peace-offerings'), in which the blood, fat, and vital parts were offered to God and the rest eaten by the worshippers, who thus in the convention of the sacramental meal effected solidarity one with another and all with God. This was an important element in the covenant ceremony (cf. Exod. 24.11).

**32. he wrote upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses:** the conception of a written record of the law or terms of the Covenant is well established in the Deuteronomic tradition (cf. Dt. 27.3; Jos. 24.26), which must surely reflect a usage familiar to the Deuteronomic historian from the end of the monarchy (Beyerlin, op. cit., pp. 52-53). That these passages reflect an older tradition is indicated by Exod. 24.3, 4, 7 (probably E), and by the fact that in the Hittite vassal-treaties of the 14th and 13th centuries it was the written record which gave a treaty validity. 'A copy of the law' (cf. Dt. 17.18) is rendered in LXX to *deuteronomion* ('the second law'), hence 'Deuteronomy'. 'The law', expanded in Deuteronomic interpretation to include the whole Deuteronomic 'law of Moses' (Dt. 31.9-13, 24-29), was the development of the original tradition of an epitome of the law, such as the Twelve Adjurations (Dt. 27.15-26) or the original form of the Decalogue or similar statements, to which smaller groups of apodictic laws in the Book of the Covenant probably belong (Alt, 'Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts', KS I, 1953, pp. 278-332).

**33ff.** The public assembly for the reading or recitation of the law, though based on a ceremony such as that described in Dt. 27.11-26, reflects rather the development of this practice as visualized in the late Deuteronomic passage, Dt. 31.11ff., which also mentions 'resident aliens' (RSV *sojourner*), **women and children**. The resident alien (Hebrew *gēr*, Arabic *jār*, usually *jār Allāh*), as under the protection of God and so acknowledging his authority, is admitted to the divine assembly. The **elders, officers, and judges** are mentioned also with the tribal heads in 23.2 and 24.1 as the representatives of the people at the Sacrament of the Covenant at Shechem, and probably this reflects actual usage at the general assembly. In this context the elders had real significance as the representatives of Israel (cf. 1 Sam. 4.3ff., 8.4, 15.30; 2 Sam. 5.3), fulfilling this function for the last time at Solomon's dedication of the Temple, the new amphictyonic shrine (1 Kg. 8.1, 3). Thereafter, with the development of the monarchy, the elders had a merely local significance. See further, R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 1961, pp. 137-38, 152-53. On the 'officers'

in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded at the first, that they should bless the people of Israel.<sup>84</sup> And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law.<sup>85</sup> There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners who lived among them.

**9** When all the kings who were beyond the Jordan in the hill country and in the lowland all along the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the

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see on 1.10. The mention of the Levites, who bless the people, and, it is implied by the secondary 'first of all' (RSV at the first, which is taken with as Moses . . . had commanded), pronounce the solemn curse, and the division of the people towards Ebal and Gerizim reflects the usage described in Dt. 27.9-26. 'All Israel', of course, denoted the sacral community in general.

#### THE COVENANT WITH GIBEON 9.1-27

This incident, though connected with the battle against the Amorites at Gibeon (chapter 10) in the pre-Deuteronomic compilation, and possibly also in historical fact, is transmitted in a separate tradition. Rather there are two traditions combined in the pre-Deuteronomic compilation. The bulk of the chapter records the tradition of the agreement between the Hebrews, probably the Benjaminites, and the 'Hivites', or Horites (verse 7, see *ad loc.*) of Gibeon and their associates of Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim (verse 17) in the upland plain neighbouring Benjamin and the strategic passes to it at Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim. This was a natural development in the penetration of Benjamin, and it was also natural that the agreement should be made at the sanctuary of Gilgal, to which the tradition is explicitly related (verse 6). At some time in the Hebrew settlement an agreement may have been made or ratified at the sanctuary of Gibeon, which continued as a notable sanctuary till the time of Solomon (1 Kg. 3.4ff.). The somewhat humorous account of the Gibeonite ruse in verses 1-15 may be the Gibeonite version of the tradition, as Hertzberg suggests (*op. cit.*, p. 68), and the whole tradition may really stem from Gibeon, being transferred to Gilgal by the pre-Deuteronomic compiler (Hertzberg, *ibid.*). The tradition of the covenant between the Gibeonites and Benjaminites is strikingly corroborated by the incident in 2 Sam. 21.2ff., where the Gibeonites were able to appeal to this agreement against the house of Saul. One of the main sources of chapter 9 is an aetiological tradition explaining this situation.

This tradition reflects the theological difficulty felt by the pre-Deuteronomic

compiler in this significant qualification of the ideal of the intransigent implementation of the divine promise in the Occupation, which was fostered by the cult-legend of Gilgal. It reflects also a situation which must have recurred in the incorporation of Canaanite districts into the national territorial state under David and Solomon, the beginnings of which we may detect in the incident of Saul and the Gibeonites (2 Sam. 21.2ff.). Many ties between hitherto independent elements of Israel must have been severely strained in competition with aggressive nationalism directed from Jerusalem. These problems are reflected in Joshua's stern dealing with the Gibeonites in grudging concession to the convention of the formal agreement on the representations of the chiefs of the people (verses 18-23). That this issue should be so fresh in the mind of the pre-Deuteronomiac compiler supports Noth's dating of this work between the Disruption of the monarchy and the reign of Ahab (see Introduction to chapter 7, p. 81).

The account of this reaction to the agreement with the Gibeonites serves as a link with the other tradition, the menial service of the Gibeonites at the sanctuary, which receives its explanation by the aetiological legend, which may be the development of the pre-Deuteronomiac compiler. In verse 20, 'This we will do to them . . .', where the demonstrative is followed by nothing in the statement, we seem to have the fragment of an earlier tradition, which may have concluded with the statement that they were to be 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' in the general sense (Dt. 29.11), denoting possibly a relationship of convenience or dependence without privilege or integration in the community of Benjamin. The definition of this as a menial office in the sanctuary is probably a later development by, or nearer the time of, the pre-Deuteronomiac compiler. It may, as verse 23 seems to suggest, refer to a minor part assigned to the Gibeonites in the cult at Gilgal, the amphictyonic sanctuary in the time of Saul and just before. This, though a minor service, may have been a privilege in recognition of the agreement with the Gibeonites, which was given a pejorative interpretation by the pre-Deuteronomiac compiler and his literary successors. On the other hand, the tradition may relate to the service in the sanctuary at Gibeon, which is well known as a sanctuary in Israel at the time of Solomon before the building of the Temple (1 Kg. 3.4ff.). It was associated with the 'tent of meeting' by the Chronicler (1 Chr. 16.39; 21.29), who is not likely to have invented the sacred association. Gibeon (lit. 'little hill') may have been 'the hill of God', where Saul met the prophets (1 Sam. 10.5ff.). The tradition of the menial service of the Gibeonites in the sanctuary may reflect the relegation of the natives in the cult after the appropriation of this sanctuary by Israel. There is nothing in the text which definitely localizes the tradition at Gilgal or Gibeon, though the pre-Deuteronomiac compiler probably visualized Gilgal. Möhlenbrink (op. cit., pp. 244ff.) who contends for two recensions of the tradition, regards the shrine in question as Shiloh, which was later adapted as Shechem in the recension in question in 8.30-35. The Deuteronomiac historian and the later redactor in verses 21b and 27b adapted the tradition to the cult at Jerusalem, where at least in the Second Temple there was



Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites, heard of this, <sup>a</sup> they gathered together with one accord to fight Joshua and Israel.

3 But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done

such temple-servitude, 'the servants of Solomon' (Ezr. 2.55ff.; Neh. 7.57ff.), probably, as the name suggests, a relic of an institution going back to compulsion or concession in Temple service in the early monarchy.

Thus the pre-Deuteronomic compiler, whose presentation of the occupation is conditioned by the cult-legend of the central sanctuary, which represents the occupation as the triumph of Yahweh, who demanded the co-operation of Israel to the point of intransigence, admitted the tradition of the settlement of Benjamin in agreement with their neighbours on the plateau by Gibeon, but frowned on it. He represents the agreement as not spontaneous and cordial, but as the result of a trick which laid Israel under the obligation of an oath, which could not be revoked. The menial position of the Gibeonites in the sanctuary is also cited to emphasize this protest. This expressed also the view of the Deuteronomic historian, who used the earlier compilation practically as he found it.

I-2. A redactional introduction of the Deuteronomic historian before the introduction of the pre-Deuteronomic compiler (verse 3), which related the incident to those of Jericho and Ai. It marks a new part of the book, anticipating the campaigns against the Amorites (chapter 10) and the Canaanites under Hazor (chapter 11).

The sharply marked contour of South Palestine is here denoted, **the hill country**, rising to just over 3,000 feet at Bethel and Hebron, **the lowland** (Shephelah), the foot-hills divided by a valley of Senonian chalk running north to south parallel to the mountains, and the **coast**, or coastal plain, which is extended northwards to **Lebanon**. For the various peoples, see on 3.10. Here the Girgashites are omitted. **with one accord**: this is a new element in the account of the occupation, which the pre-Deuteronomic compiler and the Deuteronomic historian represent as the triumph of God before whom the natives are enervated by terror. If this, in spite of its late redaction, preserves a historical tradition, that may be of the reaction to the formation of the Israelite confederacy implied in 8.30-35.

3. **Gibeon**: almost certainly el-Jib, c. 6 miles NW. of Jerusalem, as suggested by the excavation of J. B. Pritchard, especially by many handles of wine-jars stamped with 'Gibeon' and certainly associated with installations for wine-making and storing on a large scale (J. B. Pritchard, *Gibeon, Where the Sun Stood Still*, 1962). From the size of the *tell* Gibeon would seem to have been the chief member of a league of four settlements of 'Hivites'; cf. LXX 'Horites' (verse 7). These, or at least the ruling caste, were probably non-Semitic Hurrians, who came ultimately from North Mesopotamia and Anatolia, and are attested in Palestine by their distinctive names on tablets from Taanach and Shechem and in the Amarna Tablets

to Jericho and to Ai, <sup>4</sup> they on their part acted with cunning, and went and made ready provisions, and took worn-out sacks upon their asses, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended, <sup>5</sup> with worn-out, patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes; and all their provisions were dry and mouldy. <sup>6</sup> And they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, 'We have come from a far country; so now make a covenant with us.' <sup>7</sup> But the men of Israel said to the Hivites, 'Perhaps you

in the 15th and 14th centuries. Their influence in the upland plain about Gibeon with its passes to the west and south-west by Kiriath-jearim (by Qiryat el-'Ainab or Abū Ghōsh) probably roused the hostility of the Amorite king of Jerusalem and his Amorite allies in the south-west, and occasioned the alliance of the 'Hivite' tetrapolis and possibly their overtures to the Hebrews. In this case the action of the Amorites in chapter 10 was the natural sequel.

**4. made ready provisions:** Hebrew *yīṣṭayyādū*, 'made ready provisions for the way' (*ṣēdāh*), with certain MSS. for the variant *yīṣṭayyārū*, AV 'made as if they been ambassadors' (*śīrīm*).

**wine-skins:** still used in the East for water.

**mended:** lit. 'bound up'.

**5. mouldy:** also in verse 12; better, after Vulgate, 'crumbly', Hebrew *niḵḵūdīm*, the root of which was used of granulated silver-work (Ca. 1.11).

**6. Gilgal:** the representation of Gilgal as the base for all Joshua's operations in South Palestine stems from the pre-Deuteronomic compilation. It was more likely that the *rapprochement* of the Gibeonites would be made after the Israelite occupation of Bethel, which was a bare mile north-east of Beeroth, which was an ally of Gibeon.

**7. men of Israel:** collective singular; note the parties to the agreement here as formally distinct from Joshua and the Gibeonites, neither of whom, however, is necessarily excluded. This probably indicates the original pre-literary source, Joshua being a feature of the pre-Deuteronomic compilation.

**Hivites:** LXX *Chorraioi*, 'Hurrians' (biblical 'Horites'), see on verse 3.

**covenant:** the same word as for the divine covenant (*b'rīt*), which may be cognate with the Akkadian preposition 'between' (Noth, *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, 1957, pp. 147-48). 'To make a covenant' means lit. in Hebrew 'to cut a covenant', referring to the accompanying sacrifice, which either served as an example of what the parties invoked upon themselves if they broke the covenant (cf. Jer. 34.18f.) or the sacrifice divided, between which the parties then passed as a symbol of communion (Gen. 15.7-18). Again, consonant with Noth's suggested etymology, 'to cut' might mean 'to divide', and the transaction between the two



live among us; then how can we make a covenant with you?' <sup>8</sup> They said to Joshua, 'We are your servants.' And Joshua said to them, 'Who are you? And where do you come from?' <sup>9</sup> They said to him 'From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard a report of him, and all that he did in Egypt, <sup>10</sup> and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who dwelt in Ash'taroth. <sup>11</sup> And our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, "Take provisions in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, 'We are your servants; come now, make a covenant with us.' " <sup>12</sup> Here is our bread; it was still warm when we took it from our houses as our food for the journey, on the day we set forth to come to you, but now, behold, it is dry and mouldy; <sup>13</sup> these wineskins were new when we filled them, and behold, they are burst; and these garments and shoes of ours are worn out from the

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parties may be illustrated by the sculpture from Rās Shamra depicting two figures with two piles of tablets between them joining finger-tips between the tablets (C. F. A. Schaeffer, *Syria* XVII, 1936, Pl. XIV). The Hebrew conception of the divine Covenant is primarily developed from such usage among human parties, and formally reproduces the features of vassal-treaties attested in the Hittite archives at Boghazköi (see General Introduction, pp. 33-35).

**8. We are your servants:** the customary deferential address, as in verse 9, but developed in verses 9-10, which cites the Drama of Salvation culminating in the victories in Transjordan, as in the speech of Rahab to the spies (2.10); cf. a further Deuteronomic echo of the Rahab speech in verses 24-25. No mention is made of the recent successes of the Israelites, to maintain the fiction of the remote home of the Gibeonites.

**10. Heshbon:** Khirbet Hesbān, c. 12 miles SW. of 'Ammān, or perhaps the adjacent mound of el-'Āl, occupied till c. 1200 B.C. by an Amorite enclave between the Arnon and the Jabbok (12.2); cf. Num. 21.21-26, with an ancient poem celebrating a former success of Heshbon against Moab (verses 27-30).

**Og king of Bashan:** cf. Num. 21.31-35. His capital Ashtaroth was probably Ashtaroth Karnaim (Ashtaroth of the Horns of Am. 6.13), which is mentioned in the Amarna Tablets (c. 1411-1358 B.C.).

**11.** No king of Gibeon is mentioned but only elders, as in certain cases in the Amarna Tablets.



very long journey.' <sup>14</sup> So the men partook of their provisions, and did not ask direction from the LORD. <sup>15</sup> And Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore to them.

16 At the end of three days after they had made a covenant with

**14. men:** LXX, with metathesis of two consonants, reads 'leaders', i.e. representatives of the people, who are cited as protagonists in the transaction in verses 15b, 18a, 19.

**did not ask direction from the LORD:** lit. 'asked not the mouth of Yahweh' (Isa. 30.2). 'Mouth' here, however, may denote 'word', as in one of the recently discovered alphabetic texts from Rās Shamra. The reference is to the oracle by the sacred lots. This suggests that the eating of the provisions was a covenant rite; cf. Gen. 31.44, 54 (E), in the case of Jacob and Laban; Gen. 26.26-31 (J), Isaac and Abimelech; and Exod. 24.11, the communion meal which consummated the Covenant (E. Auerbach, *Moses*, 1953, p. 166). In popular narrative, however, it has become the means whereby the Israelites tested the truth of the statement of the Gibeonites and thereby, by the Gibeonite ruse, the means whereby relationships were established which forbade violence; cf. the request of the captive Renauld de Châtillon for a drink in the tent of Ṣalāḥ-ed-Dīn after the Battle of Qurn Ḥaṭṭīn (1187), which the Sultan was careful enough not to give personally. The statement that 'they did not ask direction from the Lord' expresses the view of the pre-Deuteronomomic compiler that the transaction was a presumptuous modification of the principles of the holy war.

**15. The pre-literary tradition of the role of the leaders of the congregation** and that of the pre-Deuteronomomic compiler, which assigns the role to Joshua, are awkwardly combined here, and a further complication, which indicates later retouching is 'the congregation' (*hā-ʿēdāh*), which, though not peculiar to, is characteristic of, P. The designation of the representatives of the people as *nʿšī'im* is also a feature of P; hence W. Rudolph assumes without question that verse 15b is from P. The noun, however, lit. 'those are raised up', is found in older Penta-teuchal sources, also, e.g. Exod. 22.28, M.T. 27 (E); thus we prefer to limit the influence of the post-exilic redactor here to the description of Israel as 'the congregation'. Noth adduces the cogent argument that if the passages on the role of 'the leaders' had been redactional they would have been mentioned more often throughout the work (op. cit., pp. 56-57).

**peace:** Hebrew *šālôm*, lit. 'wholeness', 'integration', signifies a personal relationship, concord rather than 'peace', which is only one aspect of *šālôm*.

**16. At the end of three days:** an indefinite interval, common in saga and folklore. The theme, however, is elaborated in detail in verse 17, obviously a later redactional expansion.

them, they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them. <sup>17</sup>And the people of Israel set out and reached their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephi'rah, Be-er'oth, and Kir'iath-je'arim. <sup>18</sup>But the people of Israel did not kill them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. Then all the congregation murmured against the leaders. <sup>19</sup>But all the leaders said to all the congregation, 'We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them. <sup>20</sup>This we will do to them and let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore to them.' <sup>21</sup>And the leaders said to them, 'Let them live.' So they became hewers of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation, as the leaders had said of them.

<sup>22</sup>Joshua summoned them, and he said to them, 'Why did you deceive us, saying, "We are very far from you," when you dwell

**17. Kiriath-jearim** ('Fortress of the Maquis') is located at Qiryat el-'Ainab, also called Abū Ghōsh, c. 10 miles W. of Jerusalem on the Jaffa road, actually Tell el-Azhār, the site of the Church of Our Lady of the Ark (cf. 1 Sam. 7.1; 2 Sam. 6.2ff.), where Bronze Age shards have been found. **Chephirah** is probably Tell Kefireh, c. 5 miles W. of el-Jib (Gibeon), and **Beeroth** ('Wells') probably Rās eṭ-Ṭaḥūneh just north of el-Bireh by Bethel.

**18-21.** This section represents in substance the covenant with the Gibeonites and probably others of the tetrapolis which they represented and conditions imposed on them by Joshua in the pre-Deuteronomic compilation, but as it stands, it is the post-Deuteronomic redactional elaboration of the pre-literary tradition, where the representatives of the people mediated the covenant. Verse 20 stops short of the conditions imposed (see introduction to chapter 9), which are then abruptly introduced as menial cultic service by the pre-Deuteronomic compiler or even by a later redactor. LXX obviates this difficulty somewhat by omitting 'and the leaders said to them'. Possibly the Gibeonites and their associates were simply relegated to dependent status 'hewers of wood and drawers of water', 'for all the congregation' being added to adapt the pre-literary tradition of the oath with the Gibeonites to the aetiological tradition of the minor role of the Gibeonites in the cult (verses 23, 26-27).

**21. hewers of wood and drawers of water:** a menial status (Dt. 29.11), expressing the age of girls among the Arabs and also possibly in the Rās Shamra legend of King Keret, but here later taken as denoting a minor cultic office (see Introduction to chapter 9).

**22-26.** Note that the initiative and decision to spare the Gibeonites is Joshua's,

among us? <sup>23</sup> Now therefore you are cursed, and some of you shall always be slaves, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.' <sup>24</sup> They answered Joshua, 'Because it was told to your servants for a certainty that the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; so we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and did this thing. <sup>25</sup> And now, behold, we are in your hand: do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us.' <sup>26</sup> So he did to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the people of Israel; and they did not kill them. <sup>27</sup> But Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to continue to this day, in the place which he should choose.

**10** When Ado'ni-ze'dek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and how the inhabitants of

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surely the specific contribution of the pre-Deuteronomic compiler. In verses 16-21 the leaders of the people had already established covenantal relationships with the Gibeonites, which they declare to be binding in verse 20, though on condition of lower status (verse 21). Thus it was they who upheld the Gibeonites against the clamour of the people for vengeance, so that the same office by Joshua (verse 26) was superfluous; hence verses 16-21, with the later retouching which we have indicated, was the pre-literary tradition as distinct from the pre-Deuteronomic compilation with Joshua as protagonist in verses 22-27, with Deuteronomic retouching in verses 24 and 27b.

**23. cursed:** reflecting a later, and more specific, application of the version of the oath to the Gibeonites fixing their status as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'. **for the house of my God:** probably Gilgal in the pre-Deuteronomic compilation, but Jerusalem in the Deuteronomic historian's retouching (verse 27b) (see Introduction to chapter 9, p. 98).

#### THE BATTLE OF GIBEON AND ITS SEQUEL 10.1-41

Here again, the pre-Deuteronomic compiler has combined two tradition-complexes, that of the battle of Gibeon and the rout of the Amorites (verses 1-14), and that connected with the Cave of Makkedah (verses 16-27). These two tradition-complexes, the first based on a historical event in Israel's settlement of



the plateau north of Jerusalem and the second a local aetiological tradition of the Cave of Makkedah, are combined by the pre-Deuteronomiac compiler on the basis of the rout of the Amorites after the battle of Gibeon in the general direction of the Shephelah, where Makkedah lay. Thus Makkedah is the link which serves the turn of the pre-Deuteronomiac compiler, which is apparent in verses 10 and 16. This combination of the two tradition-complexes was further suggested by the fact that in the Amorite cities there were elements common to both traditions. The alliance between the Israelites and the Hurrian tetrapolis, besides menacing Jerusalem on her most vulnerable side, gave Israel access to the Shephelah by the Descent of Beth-horon and the Wādi eṣ-Šarār (Vale of Sorek), a tributary of which was dominated by Kiriath-jearim, and cut communications between Jerusalem and her Amorite allies in the Shephelah. In the five cities in question, however, Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, we cannot tell certainly which properly belonged to the former tradition and which to the latter. The number five may have been suggested by five trees at Makkedah (verse 26), to which the aetiological tradition was attached, or the number five in both cases may have a mnemonic value in folk-narration, as probably the five kings in Genesis 14. We should expect the cities of the five kings of the Makkedah tradition to be within the immediate range of the place in the southern Shephelah south or south-east of Azekah (see on verse 10), and it may be that in Libnah and Gezer, which are mentioned in verses 29-33 but not in the traditions of the battle of Gibeon or the incident at Makkedah, we should see elements of the original Makkedah tradition, together with Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. The destruction of the city of Debir (verses 38-39) may represent a confusion of tradition with Debir, the name of the king of Eglon (verse 3). These being the five kings of the Makkedah tradition, the elements common to both traditions which suggested the syncretism were Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon.

It is thus clear that we consider verses 29-39 as the deliberate fusing by the pre-Deuteronomiac compiler of the two tradition-complexes in question, which he makes the basis of his summary and somewhat unrealistic account of the conquest of the south, according to his schematic description of the conquest of the Promised Land after the occupation of the centre of the country consummated by the covenant-sacrament at Shechem (8.30-35) and the alliance with Gibeon and her neighbours (9.2-27), and followed by campaign in Galilee (chapter 11).

In the account of the battle of Gibeon the pre-Deuteronomiac compiler worked probably with two traditions, the one which depicts the activity of God in a hail-storm during the rout (verse 11) and the other, where the pre-Deuteronomiac compiler understands a passage from the Book of Jasher as depicting the divine activity in a preternaturally long day (verses 13b-14 on verses 12-13a). The actual citation from the ancient poem refers to a prolongation of darkness rather than daylight, as proposed by B. J. Alfrink ('Het "stil staan" van zon en maan in Jos. 10.12-15', *Studia Catholica* XXIV, 1949, pp. 238-69), and may refer to the advance of Joshua with the men of Ephraim from his home north of the Valley of

Aijalon rather than the pursuit of the Amorites down the pass of Beth-horon, the prayer being for the prolongation of darkness to facilitate a night march and enhance the element of surprise in attack, as clearly indicated in verse 9a. Unfortunately, the brief citation does not give details of the battle, which seems to have been rather a surprise and rout than a pitched battle, like the incident by the Waters of Merom (11.6-9).

The scale of the operations, even if we discount the Amorites in the cities of the Shephelah as an accretion in the pre-Deuteronomic compilation from the aetiological tradition of the Cave of Makkedah, suggests native reaction, if not to the development of the Israelite confederacy at Shechem (8.30-35), at least to the Ephraimite expansion from the north, southwards under Joshua, whose home tradition located at Timnah c. 15 miles N. of Gibeon (so Alt, 'Josua', KS I, 1953, p. 188). This suggests that Shechem may have been the home of the tradition if Joshua was actually associated with the battle. The probable participation of Benjamin in the action in support of Ephraim and their neighbours and allies at Gibeon suggests that a version of the tradition was indeed preserved at the tribal shrine of Gilgal also. It is uncertain whether the tradition of Joshua's advance from Gilgal in verse 9 relates to this pre-literary tradition or to the pre-Deuteronomic compilation, which throughout the narrative in chapter 10 somewhat unrealistically depicts Gilgal, the central shrine of all Israel, as Joshua's base, to which he returns not only after his campaigns in the southern Shephelah (verse 43), but even between his surprise of the Amorites at Gibeon and the Makkedah incident (verse 15). Nothing indicates the independence of tradition of the action at Gibeon and the limited pursuit of the Amorites and that of the Cave of Makkedah more than this note by the pre-Deuteronomic compiler.

In the Makkedah incident also two pre-literary traditions are discernible. One explains what was probably a rock-fall at the cave by the tradition that the stones were laid by the Israelites to immure the fugitives and presumably to starve them to death (a measure which has been adopted by others than the Israelites with brigands who have run to earth in the limestone caves with which Palestine is honeycombed), and the other that the stones were cast upon the corpses of the five kings, who had been hanged on five trees, which were probably landmarks in the neighbourhood.

The fusion of the two tradition-complexes of the action at Gibeon and the topographical aetiological traditions of Makkedah affords an interesting instance of the mutual influence of popular aetiological and historical tradition.

The statements of the pursuit of the Amorites to Makkedah (verse 10) and the fixing of the camp of the Israelites at Makkedah (verse 21) and the statement of the ban on Makkedah and its king (verse 28) probably belong to the introduction to the pre-Deuteronomic fusion of the two tradition-complexes.

The fact that the account of the sweeping and comprehensive conquest of the South country is later modified, Hebron (verses 36-37) and Debir (verses 38-39) falling respectively to Caleb (15.14) and Othniel (15.16-19; Jg. 1.11-15), and the

Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, <sup>2</sup> he feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty.

<sup>3</sup> So Ado'ni-ze'dek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, to Piram king of Jarmuth, to Japhi'a king of Lachish, and to

coastal plain and possibly also the Shephelah being beyond Judah's power to subdue according to the significant exception made by the Deuteronomic historian (Jg. 1.19), suggests that verses 28-43 are not from the Deuteronomic historian reflecting the advance of Josiah into the Philistine plain on the decline of Assyria, as is usually maintained. In our opinion they belong to the pre-Deuteronomic compilation, and reflect the extent of the realm under David and Solomon, with which the compiler was familiar. The statement that 'Joshua defeated them from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza' (verse 41) does not necessarily include the town of Gaza but its territory, and dependencies at some distance from the town, which is but twenty-three miles from Lachish.

**1. Adoni-zedek:** 'my Lord is Zedek', Zedek, found in the form Zuduk (Şuduk) as a divine name in sources relating to Phoenician religion (Philo of Byblus), was an Amorite deity particularly associated with Jerusalem, as indicated by the name Melchizedek, the king of (Jeru)salem in Genesis 14. LXX gives the name as Adoni-Bezek, as in Jg. 1.5ff., on which see.

**Jerusalem:** the first certain mention of the city in the Old Testament, at least by this name, which is attested as 'Urušalima in the Egyptian Execration Texts (19th century), which means probably '(the god) Šalem has founded'. In the Amarna Tablets, from seven letters from its king it appears as a major Egyptian fief in Palestine under a hereditary dynast Abdi-Khepa. Jerusalem naturally resented the Hebrew alliance with the Hurrians immediately to the north, her most vulnerable side, and rallied other Amorite elements in the mountains, e.g. Hebron and possibly also in the Shephelah (but see Introduction to chapter 10, pp. 105f). Whatever the arrangement of the independent traditions by the pre-Deuteronomic compiler, there is a large degree of historical probability in the action of Jerusalem. **as he had done to Jericho and its king:** on the prototype of the ban and a linking phrase in the pre-Deuteronomic compilation, cf. 6.21, though the king is not mentioned, 8.2, 10.28, 29.

**2. all its men were mighty:** probably refers to the status of the men of Gibeon as a feudal garrison (originally under Egypt), the city itself not being under a king (like one of the royal cities); cf. the leading role of its 'elders' (see on 9.11).

**3. Hebron:** also called Kiriath-arba (15.13); cf. the ruined site called el-Arba'in on the hill of er-Rumeideh at Hebron, where there are Late Bronze and Early Iron Age shards. The ancient city lay on the south-west slope of the depression occupied by the modern town el-Khalil ('The Friend' sc. of God, namely Abraham).



Debir king of Eglon, saying, <sup>4</sup> 'Come up to me, and help me, and let us smite Gibeon; for it has made peace with Joshua and with the people of Israel.' <sup>5</sup> Then the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered their forces, and went up with all their armies and encamped against Gibeon, and made war against it.

<sup>6</sup> And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, saying, 'Do not relax your hand from your servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us; for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the hill country are gathered against us.' <sup>7</sup> So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD said to Joshua, 'Do not

Hebron controlled the road south to Beersheba and the head of two passes to the coastal plain, the Wādī el-Afranj and the Wādī es-Sanṭ (Vale of Elah).

**Jarmuth:** 16 miles SW. of Jerusalem and c. 1½ miles N. of the Vale of Elah.

**Lachish:** Tell ed-Duweir, 15 miles W. of Hebron, occupied from the Chalcolithic to the Hellenistic period, identified by J. L. Starkey by its location by Eusebius on the Roman road which runs past it, and almost certainly confirmed by military or political dispatches to its governor found in early 6th-century debris in the gate-tower.

**Eglon:** not Khirbet 'Ajlūn, 1½ miles NW. of Tell el-Ḥesy, which was not occupied before Byzantine times. Verses 34-36 suggest a location between Lachish and Hebron, but it may have lain to the south-east of Lachish, in which case it may be the conspicuous mound of Tell 'Eiṭūn (Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 95), c. 7 miles SE. of Tell ed-Duweir and 10 miles SW. of Hebron. Other localities conjectured are Tell esh-Sheikh el-'Areineh, 5 miles NW. of Tell ed-Duweir or the conspicuous Tell en-Najileh, 7 miles SW. of Lachish, or Tell el-Ḥesy, 7 miles WSW. of Tell ed-Duweir, where a tablet found in the excavations of F. J. Bliss mentioned the king of Lachish. The kings named are unknown, and **Hoham** is a suspect form and may be a corruption of Horam, given in verse 33 as the king of Gezer.

**4. made peace:** better 'established concord'.

**5. went up:** i.e. from the foot-hills for the most part to the high plateau. The Old Testament is very punctilious in describing movement in Palestine with its sharply diversified contour.

**6-7.** The appeal to Joshua at **Gilgal** probably betrays the pre-Deuteronomic compiler, but it may possibly be from the Benjaminite version of the pre-literary tradition preserved at Gilgal (see Introduction to chapter 10).

fear them, for I have given them into your hands; there shall not a man of them stand before you.' <sup>9</sup> So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal. <sup>10</sup> And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them by the way of the ascent of Bethhor'on, and smote them as far as Aze'kah and Makke'dah. <sup>11</sup> And as they fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth-hor'on, the LORD threw down great stones from

8. The regular formula of reassurance, re-echoed in the Deuteronomic introduction in 1.1-9, but probably reflecting the oracle as an element in the tradition of the holy war, which is suggested by the declaratory perfect (cf. 6.2, 8.1, 11.6).

9. **suddenly . . . all night:** the Hebrew success was owing to a night march and surprise attack, which suggests that the standing still of the sun and moon (verse 12b) of the poetic citation really refers to the anxiety of the Israelites to arrive before daylight rather than for a preternaturally long day to exploit the rout of the enemy, as the prose comment in verse 13b adds (see *ad loc.*).

10. **the LORD threw them into a panic:** panic is the regular instrument of God in the holy war (cf. Exod. 14.24; 1 Sam. 7.10). Indeed, most of the conflicts in the settlement of Israel in Palestine seem to have been settled by this psychological factor rather than by bitter hand-to-hand fighting.

**by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon:** also called the 'descent' (verse 11). This was one of the few means of access from the north part of the Shephelah and the coastal plain to the plateau north of Jerusalem, dominated by Gibeon. This most northerly pass to the Shephelah was taken because the southern exits were dominated by Chephirah (see on 9.17). The name Beth-horon denotes the shrine of a god Horon, who is known from theophoric names in the Egyptian Execration Texts and from the Rās Shamra texts.

**Azekah:** Tell ez-Zakariyeh, where the Wādī es-Sanṭ (lower part of the Vale of Elah) crosses the north-south depression of the Shephelah.

**and unto Makkedah:** perhaps added by the pre-Deuteronomic compiler to adjust the historical tradition to the local aetiological tradition of the Cave of Makkedah. The location is uncertain, but probably not at el-Mughār ('the Cave') near Ekron in the Philistine plain, but rather in the foothills east of the main north-south depression, where Eusebius' location ten Roman miles from Eleutheropolis (Beit Jibrīn) and eight from Bethshemesh, would suggest the vicinity of Beit Jamāl, where the cave might be identical with any of the large limestone caves of the region.

11. **great stones:** hail-stones as divine weapons (cf. Job 38.22; Rev. 8.7). The pre-Deuteronomic compiler, consistently with his presentation of the action as the

heaven upon them as far as Aze'kah, and they died; there were more who died because of the hailstones than the men of Israel killed with the sword.

12 Then spoke Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the men of Israel; and he said in the sight of Israel,

'Sun, stand thou still at Gibeon,  
and thou Moon in the valley of Ai'jalon.'

13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,  
until the nation took vengeance on their enemies.

Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stayed in the midst

triumph of God, emphasizes that more died by the hail than by the sword, not reckoning with the fact that such hail would be as deadly to the pursuers. Such a narrative as the elaboration of the cult-legend must be used very carefully as a historical source.

**12ff.** The pre-Deuteronomic compiler cites a fragment from a poetic epic no longer extant. Here we must carefully distinguish between the poetic citation (verses 12b-13a) and the prose, and prosaic, interpretation of the pre-Deuteronomic compiler in verse 13b. In the former we have a warrior's dramatic appeal, either for more time (more daylight) to exploit the victory or probably for more darkness to make a surprise attack before sunrise, which is supported by the tradition of the night march and surprise attack in verse 9. Here 'stand still' means 'be inactive'. The metre seems to demand that 'stayed' ought to be omitted in verse 13a. The reference might then be to an atmospheric obscuration, which masked the advance of the Israelites, as Thothmes III exploited a summer morning mist in his advance on Megiddo in 1479 B.C. The hail in verse 11 suggests a dark cloudy winter morning. Thus the oldest source, the fragment of the Book of Jashar, implies no miracle. This is only introduced in the prose interpretation of the pre-Deuteronomic compiler, who, mediating the occupation as the object of faith in the cult-legend of Gilgal, emphasizes throughout the miraculous as a token of God's immediate activity.

**12. Aijalon:** modern Yālū, c. 4 miles S. of the western end of the pass of Beth-horon, where the Wādi Salmān gives direct and easy access from Gibeon to the Shephelah.

**13. until the nation took vengeance on their enemies:** better with Delitzsch 'until he had avenged himself on the nation of his enemies', positing the omission of *m* (prepositional) after the final *m* of *yikkōm* ('had avenged').

**the Book of Jashar:** from this citation and from David's lament for Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1.18) this work was devoted to warlike exploits, and was probably



of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.  
 14 There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD hearkened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

15 Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

16 These five kings fled, and hid themselves in the cave at Makke'dah. 17 And it was told Joshua, 'The five kings have been found, hidden in the cave at Makke'dah.' 18 And Joshua said, 'Roll great stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them; 19 but do not stay there yourselves, pursue your enemies, fall upon their rear, do not let them enter their cities; for the LORD your God has given them into your hand.' 20 When Joshua and the

a national epic, like the Book of the Wars of Yahweh (Num. 21.14-15), with which it may be identical, Jashar referring perhaps to the first word, by which ancient books were often known, e.g. the books of the Pentateuch in Jewish tradition. The poetic citation concerning the building of the Temple in 1 Kg. 8.12-13 is from 'the Book of the Song' according to LXX, which, by the transposition of two consonants, may be a scribal corruption of the Book of Jashar. If this is so, the Book of Jashar, which contained so many martial exploits, culminated in the foundation of the Temple. In its earlier passages it developed the theme of the occupation of the Promised Land, which was represented as the exploit of Yahweh, as the title the Book of the Wars of Yahweh indicates. The conception was translated into prose by the pre-Deuteronomic compiler with local aetiological amplifications, though his main source was the tradition of the occupation of the Promised Land as the theme of the cult-legend of Gilgal with related aetiological traditions of local topography. This citation, in conjunction with that in 2 Sam. 1.18, dates the pre-Deuteronomic compilation from at least after the early part of the reign of David.

15. This verse is omitted in certain mss. of LXX, presumably because it was felt to be out of place if the following incident at Makkedah was a unity with the story of the campaign at Gibeon. In M.T. it indicates the mutual independence of these traditions (see introduction to chapter 10).

18. The rock-fall at the cave is explained as the immurement of the kings; cf. verse 27, where the stones are explained alternatively as being cast on their corpses, indicating two aetiological traditions (see introduction to chapter 10).

20. **fortified cities:** lit. 'cities of fortification', the last word indicating that which is cut off abruptly, an impression given by the high crenellated walls about ten feet thick surmounting the steep slopes of the city, reinforced as at Lachish, by

men of Israel had finished slaying them with a very great slaughter, until they were wiped out, and when the remnant which remained of them had entered into the fortified cities,<sup>21</sup> all the people returned safe to Joshua in the camp at Makke'dah; not a man moved his tongue against any of the people of Israel.

22 Then Joshua said, 'Open the mouth of the cave, and bring those five kings out to me from the cave.'<sup>23</sup> And they did so, and brought those five kings out to him from the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.<sup>24</sup> And when they brought those kings out to Joshua, Joshua summoned all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, 'Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings.' Then they came near, and put their feet on their necks.<sup>25</sup> And Joshua said to them, 'Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and of good courage; for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.'<sup>26</sup> And afterward

a glacis of beaten earth faced by limestone plaster at an angle of 29°, a technique introduced in the Hyksos period (c. 1750-1600 B.C.) to counteract the battering-ram (so Y. Yadin). The semi-nomad Israelites had neither the experience nor the temperament to make any impression on such defences. With such security, it is preposterous that the kings should have taken refuge in a cave, and this reveals the essentially popular aetiological tradition.

21. **moved his tongue:** Hebrew lit. 'sharpened . . .', a figurative expression for 'objected' (cf. Exod. 11.7).

23. On the five towns, see on verse 3 and Introduction to chapter 10, p. 105.

24. **chiefs:** Hebrew sing. *kāšîn*, cognate with Arabic *kādî*, 'judge', lit. decider. Here a military commander is denoted (cf. Jg. 11.6, 11 (Jephthah)); but it is used of a ruler in general (Isa. 1.10, etc.).

**feet upon the necks:** an act of imitative magic, which engaged the power of the supernatural to effect the result so depicted, hence operating as potently upon the mind of the ancient Oriental, here the subjects of the kings, as the verbal act of imitative magic, the curse. It was a widespread gesture of domination in antiquity; cf. Assyrian sculpture and the throne of Tutankhamen, which represented his enemies on the footstool (cf. Ps. 110.1).

25. Cf. Deuteronomic introduction, 1.1-9, which may nevertheless reproduce an ancient oracle-form.

26. The **five trees** were probably a holy place in popular local religion; cf. an Arab *wēlî*, sometimes a historical person once noted for piety or success, but often

Joshua smote them and put them to death, and he hung them on five trees. And they hung upon the trees until evening; <sup>27</sup> but at the time of the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, and threw them into the cave where they had hidden themselves, and they set great stones against the mouth of the cave, which remain to this very day.

28 And Joshua took Makke'dah on that day, and smote it and its king with the edge of the sword; he utterly destroyed every person in it, he left none remaining; and he did to the king of Makke'dah as he had done to the king of Jericho.

29 Then Joshua passed on from Makke'dah, and all Israel with him, to Libnah, and fought against Libnah; <sup>30</sup> and the LORD gave it also and its king into the hand of Israel; and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and every person in it; he left none remaining in it; and he did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

31 And Joshua passed on from Libnah, and all Israel with him, to Lachish, and laid siege to it, and assaulted it: <sup>32</sup> and the LORD gave Lachish into the hand of Israel, and he took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and every person in it, as he had done to Libnah.

a local *numen* connected with springs, rocks, or trees, generally conspicuous. Such a feature may have suggested the five kings here and in the tradition of the Gibeonite incident after the fusion of the two tradition-complexes in the pre-Deuteronomic compilation (see Introduction to chapter 10, pp. 105f.).

27. at the time of the going down of the sun: see on 8.29. The ritual observance seems to reflect a Deuteronomic elaboration of the pre-Deuteronomic narrative.

to this very day: the hall-mark of an aetiological tradition.

28ff. On literary affinity, see Introduction to chapter 10, pp. 106f.

utterly destroyed: Hebrew 'laid under the ban' (*hērem*), a feature of the holy war. Here, however, events are schematized by the pre-Deuteronomic compiler.

29. Libnah: in the Shephelah (15.42), but of disputed location. The name ('White') suggests Tell eṣ-Ṣāfī ('the Gleaming Mound'), Blanchegarde of the Crusaders, on a limestone bluff where the Wādī es-Sanṭ debouches to the plain c. 10 miles N. of Lachish. An alternative suggestion is Tell Burnāṭ in a similar position in the Wādī Jibrīn, six miles farther south (Albright, *BASOR* 15, 1924, p. 19; K. Elliger, *PJB* XXX, 1934, pp. 58ff.). The archaeological remains at both,



33 Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people, until he left none remaining.

34 And Joshua passed on with all Israel from Lachish to Eglon; and they laid siege to it, and assaulted it; <sup>35</sup> and they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword; and every person in it he utterly destroyed that day, as he had done to Lachish.

36 Then Joshua went up with all Israel from Eglon to Hebron; and they assaulted it, <sup>37</sup> and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and its king and its towns, and every person in it; he left none remaining, as he had done to Eglon, and utterly destroyed it with every person in it.

38 Then Joshua, with all Israel, turned back to Debir and assaulted it, <sup>39</sup> and he took it with its king and all its towns; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed every person

sites would suit the reference here to Libnah as between Lachish and Makkedah near Beit Jamāl by Bethshemesh.

**33. Horam:** the name is exceptional in this section, and may suggest the original of Hoham in verse 3.

**Gezer:** Tell Jezer c. 6 miles S. of Lydda, excavated by R. A. S. Macalister. In 16.10 and Jg. 1.29 it is stated that Ephraim could not take Gezer, but this does not contradict the present statement, since the reduction of the place is not stated, but simply the defeat of the forces of Gezer before Lachish. Gezer was probably part of the original local tradition of the five kings associated with the five trees at Makkedah, all of whom would naturally be in the Shephelah.

**36-37. Hebron:** belongs properly to the tradition of the battle of Gibeon. The destruction of the place seems at variance with 15.14; so also in the case of Debir (verse 38) (cf. 15.16-19; Jg. 1.11-15), but G. E. Wright ('The Literary and Historical Problem of Joshua 10 and Judges 1', *JNES* V, 1946, pp. 105-14) emphasizes the stormy history of most Palestinian sites, including Tell Beit Mirsim, Tell el-Hesi, and Bethshemesh in the south, between the last quarter of the 13th century and the middle of the 11th century, during which Tell Beit Mirsim, which Albright identifies with Debir (but cf. on verses 38-39), was destroyed three times.

**38-39. Debir:** located by Albright at Tell Beit Mirsim, c. 13 miles SW. of Hebron. Jos. 15.16-19 and Jg. 1.10-15, however, suggest a location nearer Hebron. Noth (op. cit., p. 90) proposes Khirbet Ṭarrāmeh in a small well-watered plain 5 miles SW. of Hebron. On the other hand, there is no mention of Debir (also called Kiriath-sepher) in the Hebron district in the town lists in Judah (15.52-54), whereas Debir, alternatively named 'Kiriath-sannah', is mentioned in the district of Goshen,

in it; he left none remaining; as he had done to Hebron and to Libnah and its king, so he did to Debir and to its king.

40 So Joshua defeated the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded. <sup>41</sup>And Joshua defeated them from Ka'desh-bar'nea to Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, as far as Gibeon. <sup>42</sup>And Joshua took all these kings and their land at one

where Tell Beit Mirsim is (15.48-51, on which see). Notwithstanding Wright's archaeological evidence, the present incident is unlikely in view of the capture of Debir by Othniel (15.16-19; Jg. 1.11-15), and may be a secondary tradition in the pre-Deuteronomic schematization suggested by Debir the name of the king of Eglon (verse 3).

**40. Negeb:** (etymology unknown) refers to the southern foot-hills of Judah and the plains about Beersheba, hence generally to the south. It was a common noun for semi-arid country, or steppe, hence its qualification as the Negeb of Arad (Jg. 1.16), the Negeb of Judah (1 Sam. 27.10), and the Negeb of the Cherethites and the Negeb of Caleb (1 Sam. 30.14).

**the slopes** (Hebrew <sup>a</sup>šdôṭ) are 'cliffs' according to G. B. Gray (*Numbers* (ICC), 1903, p. 286), qualified in 12.3 and 13.20 by 'Piṣṣah' and in Num. 21.15 parallel to 'the valley' by Arnon. It may mean 'off-flow'; cf. a root šd ('effluence') in the Rās Shamra texts and <sup>a</sup>šad ('to flow, pour off') in Aramaic. In the present comprehensive description of South Palestine the term must refer to the land draining to the Dead Sea, which falls steeply away to the east to plunge finally in high cliffs to the Dead Sea.

**all that breathed:** Hebrew 'all breath' or 'all life', a Deuteronomic phrase (cf. Dt. 20.16).

**41. Kadesh-barnea:** (Dt. 1.2), the district around 'Ain Qudeirāt with its tell with remains of the 8th-7th centuries, but probably occupied earlier. A spring in the oasis about two and a half miles from 'Ain Qudeirāt called 'Ain Qadeis preserves the ancient name.

**Gaza:** the most southerly of the cities occupied in the first half of the 12th century by the Philistines, about two miles from the Mediterranean with outlying fiefs in the foothills of Judah. It was an important post on the trunk highway to Egypt as the last considerable settlement in the settled land before the desert stages to the Delta. It was the metropolis of North Sinai and the terminal of desert-borne trade with Arabia.

**the country of Goshen:** not the marginal land north-east of the Delta (Gen. 46.28). Noth (*JPOS* XV, 1935, pp. 35-44) would identify it with the settlement

time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.<sup>43</sup> Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

**11** When Jabin king of Hazor heard of this, he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of

of Goshen in 15.51, for which he proposes Tell Beit Mirsim, which he regards as the capital of the city-state Goshen. The use of the definite article before Goshen in 11.16 indicates that it is a common noun and so it may describe a certain type of country, as often occurs in the description of Palestine, e.g. 'the "hill country, the steppe, the lowland, and 'the off-flow"' (on the subject of regional geography see A. D. Baly, *Geographical Companion to the Bible*, 1963, pp. 60ff.).

#### THE CAMPAIGN AT THE WATERS OF MEROM AND THE REDUCTION OF THE NORTH 11.1-23

As in the account of the occupation of the south (chapter 10), the pre-Deuteronomistic compiler has related one incident in the occupation of the north (chapter 11), perhaps in each case the most significant, to present his picture of the occupation of the Promised Land by the direct agency of God. The pattern of the compiler's account is the same as in chapter 10, a native coalition (verses 1-5; cf. 10.1-5) under a conspicuous leader Jabin of Hazor (cf. Adonizedek of Jerusalem), a reassuring oracle (verse 6; cf. 10.8), a sudden and decisive attack (verses 7-9; cf. 10.9-14), the over-running of the country and the general destruction of certain towns under the ban (verses 10-15; cf. 10.28-39). The pre-Deuteronomistic compiler closes his account with a general résumé of the districts over-run (verses 16-17; cf. 10.40-42), after which both accounts are rounded out by a general review of the whole land occupied. Here significantly it is admitted that 'Joshua made war a long time with all those kings' (verse 18), by which the compiler indicates that he has not given a detailed account of the occupation, but has selected for detailed treatment the most significant events in his general rendering of the occupation as the subject of the cult-legend of the central shrine. This prepares us for the account of the piecemeal and partial nature of the occupation in Joshua, which is admitted in 15.63, 16.10, and 17.12, which may be adjustments by the Deuteronomistic redactor in harmony with Judges 1. This obviously presented a theological problem to the Deuteronomistic historian in view of the pre-Deuteronomistic compiler's transmission of the cultic conception of the triumph of God in the occupation of the Promised Land. A solution is offered as in the case of the Pharaoh's opposition in the Drama of Salvation: the resistance of the Canaanites was inspired by Yahweh in order to destroy them more thoroughly (verse 20), which we regard as an expansion by the Deuteronomistic historian.

Underlying the pre-Deuteronomistic compilation here as in the campaign at



Gibeon (10.1-15) there is a genuine historical tradition. In this case it is probably not attached to a shrine, but is a tribal tradition, probably of Naphtali, in whose tribal territory the main action is set at the Waters of Merom. The leading role of Naphtali in the defeat of Sisera (Jg. 4.6-10, 5.18) suggests that at the Waters of Merom, too, they played a leading part, if not indeed the sole role. This may account for the part that 'Jabin of Hazor' plays in the latter tradition. This, however, is a secondary element in that tradition, Hazor being at that time destroyed and probably occupied by the Israelites, as the recent excavations of Yadin and his colleagues at Tell el-Qedah have convincingly shown. The role of Joshua and all Israel is, of course, a feature of the pre-Deuteronomistic compilation, and the leader was probably a tribal hero of Naphtali, whose name is now lost, as Noth has suggested (op. cit., p. 67). In view of the connection with Barak, the hero of the victory over Sisera in the central plain with Kadesh, and the persistence of the tradition—quite anachronistic—of Jabin of Hazor in the tradition of Barak's exploit, we might suggest that the historical tradition of the battle at the Waters of Merom stemmed from Kadesh—but that is simply a conjecture. The historical situation is probably the penetration of the Hebrew settlers, who for some time, probably since the last two decades of the 14th century, had occupied the undesirable scrub country below the escarpment of Upper Galilee to the more fertile upland plain of Upper Galilee, with its more intensive settlement and communications with the Phoenician coast, as Y. Aharoni's archaeological survey of the region has indicated ('Problems of the Israelite Conquest', *Antiquity and Survival*, II, 1957, pp. 142-50) (see further, General Introduction, pp. 41-43).

The closing section (verses 21-23) in the comprehensive statement of Joshua's extermination of the Anakim (verse 21) seems to be a late appendix to the pre-Deuteronomistic compilation, further elaborated by the Deuteronomistic historian in the qualification of this statement (verse 22), the statement of Joshua's fulfilment of Moses' Divine commission, the proleptic statement of the apportionment of the land, and the statement that 'the land had rest from war' (verse 23), which recalls the familiar pattern of the Deuteronomistic historian in Judges.

**1. Jabin king of Hazor:** 'the king of Canaan' in Jg. 4.2, which is secondary, indicates the significance of Hazor in Galilee. This is supported by the role Hazor plays in the Amarna Tablets, which show it dominating eastern Galilee and allied with Tyre against Sidon, and in the Mari texts from Mesopotamia (18th-17th centuries) it is the only city to be named in Palestine with one possible exception, and by the size of the city recently excavated by Y. Yadin and his colleagues at Tell el-Qedah on the Wādi Waqqās (Y. Yadin, *Hazor*, I, 1958; *Hazor*, II, 1960). Occupying 170 acres, this is by far the largest antiquities site in Palestine.

**Madon:** identified by Albright (*BASOR* 29, 1928, pp. 5ff.) with the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age settlement at Qurn Ḥaṭṭīn above Tiberias, the scene of the decisive victory of Šalāḥ ed-Dīn in 1187. The name probably survives in Khirbet Madīn about half a mile south of the height. *mdn* is mentioned in the Karnak lists of Thothmes III with Saruna, modern Sarūniyeh, the Jewish colony of Sharona

Ach'shaph,<sup>3</sup> and to the kings who were in the northern hill country, and in the Arabah, south of Chin'neroth, and in the lowland, and in Naphoth-dor on the west,<sup>3</sup> to the Canaanites in the east and the west, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Per'izzites, and the Jeb'usites in the hill country, and the Hivites under Hermon in the land of Mizpah.

about five miles farther south on the trade-route east of Tabor to the central plain. It is also mentioned in the Egyptian stele from Tell el-'Oreimeh (Chinnereth) by the Sea of Galilee, c. 4 miles NE. of *Ḥaṭṭīn* (Albright and A. Rowe, *JE* XIV, 1928, pp. 281ff.).

**Shimron . . . Achshaph:** may be secondary, suggested by Shimron-meron and Achshaph of 12.19ff., like the comprehensive reference to all districts of Galilee and even 'the heights of Dor' (RSV Naphoth-dor) in verse 2. Achshaph is generally taken as near Acco from the Karnak inscriptions of Thothmes III, either Tell Keisān c. 4½ miles SSE. of Acco, or et-Tell on the Nahr Mafṣūḥ, which may be a metathesis of Achshaph. But if Shimron is identical with Shimron-meron, this may be Mārūn er-Rās, c. 10 miles NW. of Ṣafed, so Achshaph here may be Tell Iksif, c. 5½ miles E. of this site.

**2. the Arabah south of Chinnereth:** the depression by the Sea of Galilee south of the town of Chinnereth (Tell el-'Oreimeh), which dominated the small harp-shaped plain of Chinnereth at the mouth of the Wādī el-Ḥammām and the Wādī el-'Amūd (possibly the Waters of Merom) from the north. Chinnereth was occupied in the Late Bronze Age and is listed by Thothmes III at Karnak. The Arabah proper is the Jordan Valley (cf. 8.14), the northern part of which is probably included here, as in 12.3, and which, on the evidence of two of the Amarna letters from the king of Piḥili (modern Fiḥl, Pella beyond Jordan east of Bethshan), was dominated by Hazor (Alt, 'Neues über Palästina aus dem Archiv Amenophis IV', *KS* III, 1959, pp. 166-68).

**Naphoth-dor:** 'the heights of Dor', i.e. the foot-hills of Carmel, Khirbet Burj et-Ṭanṭūra with Late Bronze Age remains, and a settlement of the Tekel, a people associated with the Philistines c. 1100 B.C. It is probably secondary here after 12.23.

**3. The Canaanites in the east and in the west:** i.e. in the Jordan valley and the coastal plain, where Num. 13.29 specifically locates them.

**the Jebusites** in this context indicates that the list is automatically cited by the Deuteronomic historian as descriptive of the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Palestine, since the Jebusites are associated only with Jerusalem.

**the Hivites**, in view of LXX *Chorraioi* (though not here), must always be problematical. Their location under Hermon may suggest a non-Semitic people, the Hurrians from the far north-east.

**the land of Mizpah:** not certainly known in this district (east of Jordan). Mizpah ('Watchtower') is a common Palestinian place-name.

<sup>4</sup>And they came out, with all their troops, a great host, in number like the sand that is upon the seashore, with very many horses and chariots. <sup>5</sup>And all these kings joined their forces, and came and encamped together at the waters of Merom, to fight with Israel.

6 And the LORD said to Joshua, 'Do not be afraid of them, for tomorrow at this time I will give over all of them, slain, to Israel; you shall hamstring their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.'

<sup>7</sup> So Joshua came suddenly upon them with all his people of war, by

**4. chariots:** the light war-chariot and horse were introduced to west Asia by the Aryans c. 1800 B.C., becoming thereafter the basis of tactical warfare. They were associated with a feudal system, now well illustrated in the administrative texts from Rās Shamra, in which *marīannu*, equestrian feudatories (an Aryan word), have special privileges and duties under the king. The Rās Shamra texts also show that the Canaanite chariot had two horses and a reserve, and Egyptian and Hebrew texts indicate that the chariot-team was the driver and the warrior, as distinct from the Hittite team of three, including a shield-bearer. An Egyptian text reveals that in rough country, such as the mountains of Galilee, the chariot was dismantled and reassembled in suitable terrain (Papyrus of Hori, 13th century, J. A. Wilson, *ANET*, edited by J. B. Pritchard, 1950, p. 477).

**5. the waters of Merom:** not Lake Hūleh, but either Meirūn, c. 4 miles W. of Šafed on the edge of the plateau of Upper Galilee, where there is Late Bronze and Early Iron Age debris (Albright, *BASOR* 35, 1929, p. 8) or the more conspicuous tell of Mārūn er-Rās about nine miles farther north (Y. Aharoni, op. cit., pp. 142-50). The place is *mm* of Thohtmes' Karnak lists. If Merom is Meirūn, 'the waters of Merom' may be the wādī which runs from there to the Sea of Galilee in the plain of Chinnereth, but as this is a mere winter-torrent, 'the waters' are possibly permanent springs about Meirūn or Mārūn er-Rās. The occasion for hostilities was probably the emergence of the Israelites in their penetration from the scrub-land on the escarpment to the south to the fertile plateau of Upper Galilee, to which Meirūn is the gateway (see General Introduction, pp. 41-43). A further reason for action may be the realization of the Israelite confederacy, which may also have provoked the concerted attack of the Amorites in the south (chapter 10). This may be the historical basis of the pre-Deuteronomistic compiler's presentation of the activity of all Israel in those campaigns.

6. Note again the reassuring oracle as a feature of the holy war (cf. 6.2, 8.18, 10.8), with the use of the declaratory, or prophetic, perfect of divine certainty.

**hamstring:** a denominative verb, 'to cut the sinew' (Gen. 49.6). So Israel dealt with the horses of the Aramaeans at Rabbath-Ammon (2 Sam. 8.4).

**7. suddenly:** probably a genuine tradition, in spite of the general conformity



the waters of Merom, and fell upon them. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel, who smote them and chased them as far as Great Sidon and Mis'rephoth-ma'im, and eastward as far as the valley of Mizpeh; and they smote them, until they left none remaining. <sup>9</sup>And Joshua did to them as the LORD bade him; he hamstrung their horses, and burned their chariots with fire.

<sup>10</sup> And Joshua turned back at that time, and took Hazor, and smote its king with the sword; for Hazor formerly was the head of all those kingdoms. <sup>11</sup>And they put to the sword all who were in it, utterly destroying them; there was none left that breathed, and he burned Hazor with fire. <sup>12</sup>And all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took, and smote them with the edge of the sword,

of the description of the northern campaign to the southern one (chapter 10 and particularly 10.9-15). In terrain probably specially chosen by the Canaanites for chariot warfare, surprise would be necessary, probably a night attack, when the chariots could not be used and the horses could be put into a panic. Perhaps the hamstringing of the picketed horses and the burning of the chariots (verse 6) at night was the main part of the Israelite strategy. Significantly no actual battle is described.

**8. chased them as far as Great Sidon:** this locates the action on the plateau of Upper Galilee (see on verse 5), from which access to the territory of Sidon was relatively easy. The line of flight was towards Sidon, the great Canaanite seaport and to Misrephoth-maim, Khirbet el-Musheirifeh, a Bronze Age site just south of Rās en-Nāqūra at the present Lebanese-Israeli frontier. In **Misrephoth-maim**, 'mim', with a change of vowels, may mean 'from the west' (lit. 'from the sea'), the extent of the Israelite domination from the sea, and **eastward as far as the valley of Mizpah** (east of the upper Jordan) (cf. verse 3).

**9.** This may be an editorial epilogue, which apparently misunderstands the hamstringing of the Canaanites' horses and the burning of their chariots as *after* the action at the Waters of Merom (cf. on verse 6).

**10-15.** In the over-running of the country and the general destruction, schematized on the pattern of 10.28-39, the nucleus of historical fact is the destruction of Hazor, which is attested by Yadin's recent excavations as c. 1225 B.C., being followed by two very modest settlements on the citadel in the 11th and 10th centuries before the rebuilding of the city under Solomon. In verse 10 **turned back** is significant. The capture of the enormous site of Hazor within its revetted perimeter by direct assault was beyond the men of Naphtali. In representing the fall of the place as in consequence of defeat in the field the tradition here is surely faithful to historical fact; cf. the view of Noth that the tradition of the ruin of

utterly destroying them, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. <sup>13</sup> But none of the cities that stood on mounds did Israel burn, except Hazor only; that Joshua burned. <sup>14</sup> And all the spoil of these cities and the cattle, the people of Israel took for their booty; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, and they did not leave any that breathed. <sup>15</sup> As the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

16 So Joshua took all that land, the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowland <sup>17</sup> from Mount Halak, that rises

Hazor has arisen from the known fact of the destruction of Hazor at the end of the Bronze Age till its settlement under Solomon. This argument, however, is impaired by the two Early Iron Age settlements.

13. on mounds: Hebrew *tēl* indicates a ruin-mound; cf. Arabic *tell* in place-names, which indicates a mound built up of the debris of ancient settlements. In view of the statements on the general destruction of the associates of Hazor in accordance with the divine commission through Moses in verses 12 and 15 (the exception being verses 13 and 14, which state that only Hazor was actually destroyed and emphasize the modified ban (cf. on 8.27)), we regard verses 10, 11, 13, and 14 as being from the pre-Deuteronomic compiler and verses 12 and 15 from the Deuteronomic historian.

14. RSV involves a slight textual emendation.

16. The description of all that land begins with the districts of the south, the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland referring to Judah (see on 10.40-41). The Arabah might, as at the present time, refer to the depression from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of 'Aqaba, but, as usually in the Old Testament, it refers to the Jordan Valley, hence it is to be considered with the hill country of Israel and its lowland (i.e. its foothills on the west). 'The hill-country of Israel', as distinct from 'the hill country' in verse 16a, refers to North Israel, and dates the passage and the pre-Deuteronomic compilation, to which it belongs, after the Disruption of Solomon's kingdom in 931 B.C. (see General Introduction, p. 21).

17. Mount Halak: 'mount' means range or massif as well as mountain. *Ḥālāk* is actually an adjective, 'slippery, bare'. This is an unidentified feature in the south of Palestine (that rises toward Seir), and may be the modern Jebel Ḥalāq, c. 40 miles SW. of the southern end of the Dead Sea. Seir, though also applied to the mountains of Edom, may also be west of the Arabah, as in Dt. 1.44.

toward Se'ir, as far as Ba'al-gad in the valley of Lebanon, below Mount Hermon. And he took all their kings, and smote them, and put them to death.<sup>18</sup> Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.<sup>19</sup> There was not a city that made peace with the people of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; they took all in battle.<sup>20</sup> For it was the LORD's doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be utterly destroyed, and should receive no mercy but be exterminated, as the LORD commanded Moses.

21 And Joshua came at that time, and wiped out the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities.<sup>22</sup> There was

**Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon** (cf. 12.7) **below Mount Hermon** (cf. 13.5): this seems the fusion of the traditions of two places Baal-gad, that below Hermon (13.5), possibly at Bāniās, later the shrine of Pan, and the other at Ba'albek in the Biq'a ('Plain') between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon (Eissfeldt, *F. und F.* XII, 1936, pp. 51ff.). Both were notable shrines in the Graeco-Roman period and probably much earlier. The inclusion of Ba'albek, if that location is correct, may indicate the extent of David's influence 'to the approaches to Hamath'. The other would correspond to Dan as the northern limit of Israel in the conventional description 'from Dan to Beersheba'.

20. **harden their hearts**: 'make strong, obdurate' (cf. Exod. 4.21). On the character of this verse as theological apologetic on the part of the Deuteronomic historian, see introduction to chapter 11, p. 116.

21-23. *General appendix*, verses 21-22a being an earlier appendix to the pre-Deuteronomic compilation, probably from the divided monarchy, as indicated by the distinction between the hill-country of Judah and the hill-country of Israel, and the rest from the Deuteronomic historian (see Introduction to chapter 11, p. 117).

21. **Anakim**: according to Arabic etymology, 'tall men'; according to Hebrew etymology, possibly 'necklace' or 'pendant-folk' (cf. Ca. 4.9; Jg. 8.26; Prov. 1.9). The appellative, usually *b'ne hā-'anākīm*, has become here a pseudo-gentilic. They are usually associated with Hebron, as here and in 14.12, 15.13, 14 (cf. Dt. 1.28; Num. 13.22, 28, 33).

**Debir**: also called Kiriath-sepher (see on 10.28).

**Anab**: cf. 15.50, where it is listed with Debir and other places immediately southwest of Hebron.

22. **Gaza . . . Gath . . . Ashdod**: three of the five Philistine cities in the south



none of the Anakim left in the land of the people of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, did some remain.<sup>23</sup> So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.

**12** Now these are the kings of the land, whom the people of Israel defeated, and took possession of their land beyond the

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of the coastal plain of Palestine. Gaza and Ashdod (Esdūd) retain their ancient names. Assyrian inscriptions (Sargon II, D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria*, II, §62) mention Gath (Gimtu) near Ashdod, so in the north part of this area. We regard Libnah (Tell eṣ-Ṣāfī, see on 10.29) as the same place, this being the native Canaanite name of the city, and Gath, which seems in the administrative texts from Rās Shamra to mean 'feudal holding', the description of the place as one of the major fiefs of the Philistines. For double place-names cf. Hebron—Kiriath-arba, Debir—Kiriath-sepher, and Jerusalem—Aelia—Beit el-Maqdas in Arab sources. The association of those places with survivors of the Anakim may suggest the taller Philistine race of Goliath of Gath (1 Sam. 17.4).

**23.** This verse summarizes the two halves of the Book of Joshua, the Conquest (chapters 1-12) and the Apportionment of the Land (chapters 13-24). This suggests that the writer knew the book as a whole and integrated with the Book of Deuteronomy; hence he was the Deuteronomic historian, as indeed the representation of Joshua's work as the fulfilment of God's word to Moses indicates.

#### A SUMMARY OF THE CONQUEST WITH A LIST OF THE CONQUERED KINGS 12.1-24

This section is from the Deuteronomic historian, partly from materials from the pre-Deuteronomic compilation, as in 11.16-23. Thus the superscription to the list of conquered kings west of the Jordan (verse 7-8a) is based on 11.16a, 17a, 23a (with 10.40), while verses 9-13a summarize the results of events described in chapters 6-10. For the rest of the conquered kings the Deuteronomic historian either depends on an independent list, possibly an administrative town-list, such as a fiscal list from the time of the monarchy like that used in 1 Kg. 4.7-19, or he supplements from free composition in verses 14-24. In the list of conquests beyond Jordan in verses 1-6 and the general extent of the land, he reconstructs from matter incorporated in Deuteronomy.

#### *The Occupation beyond Jordan 1-6.*

The extent of the land occupied beyond Jordan is described from **the valley of the Arnon**, the deep gorge of the Wādī Mūjib, the natural, but always disputed, northern boundary of Moab (verse 2), to **Hermon** and the eastern part of the

Jordan toward the sunrising, from the valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon, with all the Arabah eastward: <sup>2</sup> Sihon king of the Amorites who dwelt at Heshbon, and ruled from Aro'er, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and from the middle of the valley as far as the river Jabbok, the boundary of the Ammonites, that is, half of Gilead, <sup>3</sup> and the Arabah to the Sea of Chin'neroth eastward, and in the direction of Beth-jesh'imoth, to the sea of the Arabah, the Salt

Jordan valley (**the Arabah**), including the Amorite kingdom of Sihon, whose capital was at Heshbon (see on 9.10).

**2. Aroer:** Khirbet 'Arā'ir on the north bank of the precipitous Wādī Mūjib, a canyon in places c. 1,700 feet deep and two miles wide, which drains into the Dead Sea.

**and from the middle of the valley:** the text is possibly defective; cf. in the same context in 13.16 and Dt. 2.36, '... and the city that is in the middle of the valley', always with the conjunction, which suggests that a separate place from Aroer is indicated, namely the south-west boundary-point, probably half-way between Aroer and the mouth of the Arnon. The fact that no name is given to such a well-defined place suggests to us that 'ir in 13.16 and Dt. 2.36, which, we suggest, dropped out of 12.2, means not 'city' but, according to its root meaning as suggested by recent evidence from Rās Shamra, 'watchpost'. This being so, the identification of the place is difficult, but it would be by one of the few crossing-places on the lower Arnon, possibly about 'Ain el-Bušeileh, where the wādī enters its precipitous gorge c. 6 miles W. of Aroer and c. 10 miles from its mouth or, as Noth suggests (op. cit., p. 79), about Khirbet el-Ḥuṣrah, c. 1½ miles from the mouth of the Arnon, where a ford is just possible.

**Gilead:** a district, and probably a geographical term, as the definite article here and occasionally elsewhere indicates; cf. Arabic *jal'ad* ('hard, strong'). The name survives in Jebel Jal'ad, 16 miles NW. of 'Ammān. The region seems to have been divided by the lower course of the Jabbok (Nahr Zerqā), the south being in the Amorite kingdom of Sihon and the north in that of Og (verses 4 and 5). The Jabbok as the boundary with the Ammonites refers to the upper course of the Jabbok, which rises actually west of 'Ammān and runs through the city north-east, then north-west until it runs westwards into the Jordan.

**Ammonites:** always referred to by the tribal designation 'sons of Ammon'. They eventually developed a kingdom with its capital at Rabbath-ammon (modern 'Ammān), but beyond this they never developed an urban civilization.

**3. Arabah:** the Jordan valley.

**the Sea of Chinneroth:** better 'Chinnereth' after LXX, the Sea of Galilee, so called after the harp-shaped plain in the north-west of the lake, commanded from the north by the city of Chinnereth (see on 11.1).

Sea, southward to the foot of the slopes of Pisgah; <sup>4</sup> and Og king of Bashan, one of the remnant of the Reph'aim, who dwelt at Ash'ta-roth and at Ed're-i <sup>5</sup> and ruled over Mount Hermon and Sal'ecah and all Bashan to the boundary of the Gesh'urites and the Ma-ac'-athites, and over half of Gilead to the boundary of Sihon king of Heshbon. <sup>6</sup> Moses, the servant of the LORD, and the people of Israel defeated them; and Moses the servant of the LORD gave their land for a possession to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manas'seh.

**the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea:** the Dead Sea (see on 3.16).

**Beth-jeshimoth:** (cf. 13.20; Num. 33.49), located by Eusebius (*Onomasticon*) ten Roman miles south-east of Jericho near the Dead Sea. Its name may have survived in Suweimeh, north-east of the northern end of the Dead Sea, where a low tell has débris of the Early and Late Bronze and Iron Ages (F. M. Abel, *GP II*, p. 275).

**slopes of Pisgah:** perhaps 'off-flow', see on 10.40. Pisgah, the massif, of which Nebo (Rās es-Siyāḡah) is the summit, dominates the northern end of the Dead Sea from the east.

**4. Bashan:** a common noun, as the definite article indicates. Possibly from a root cognate with Arabic *baṭāna* ('to be smooth'), referring to the fertile upland plains of the Hauran about Der'ā (Edrei) and Ashtaroth Tell 'Ashtara (see on 9.10; cf. Dt. 1.4), c. 15 miles N. of Der'ā, the principal centres of the rule of Og. The kingdom of Og extended to the south-east slopes of Hermon, which dominates the Hauran, and to the broken lava country to the east (Jebel Druze). It is not certain that the kingdom of Og extended as far as the strongly fortified city of Šalkhad (biblical Salecah), actually high up in the Jebel Druze. What is meant is that his kingdom bordered that region.

**the Rephaim:** probably not an ethnic term. It is known from Phoenician inscriptions and the Rās Shamra texts as the shades, from which the conception of a vanished race may be developed. Other evidence from Rās Shamra, however, may indicate that this was the corruption of a term better known in Akkadian as 'great ones', 'potentates'.

**5. Geshurites . . . and . . . Maacathites:** Aramaean tribal groups east of the land settled by the Israelites from the Hauran to the lower Jabbok, though there was apparently no fixed boundary, those groups having probably seasonal grazings among the Israelites (13.13). From the former came the mother of Absalom (2 Sam. 3.3). The latter fought with other Aramaeans against Israel at Rabbath-ammon (2 Sam. 10.6) and left their name in the site of Abel Beth-maacah (Tell Ibn el-Qamh), 1½ miles S. of Metullah on the present Israeli-Lebanese border.



7 And these are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the people of Israel defeated on the west side of the Jordan, from Ba'al-gad in the valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, that rises toward Se'ir (and Joshua gave their land to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their allotments, <sup>8</sup> in the hill country, in the lowland, in the Arabah, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the Negeb, the land of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites): <sup>9</sup> the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; <sup>10</sup> the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; <sup>11</sup> the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; <sup>12</sup> the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; <sup>13</sup> the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; <sup>14</sup> the king of Hormah,

**6. the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh:** on their settlement see on 13.15-32.

*Comprehensive Description of the Land west of Jordan by Regions 7-8*

(For details, see on 11.16-17.)

**8. the wilderness:** i.e. of Judah, the land between Bethlehem and Tekoa and the Dead Sea (15.61) and apparently also the slopes east of Beer-sheba and the Arabah (Jg. 1.16). This region, lying in the rain-shadow, is mainly abandoned to seasonal grazing. Verse 8b is a late addition to the passage.

*The Catalogue of the Defeated Kings 9-24*

Not all of these were killed: 'smote' (verse 7) in Hebrew signifies 'defeated' (so *RSV*) as well as 'killed'.

**9-13a.** The kings are mentioned in chapters 6-10, i.e. of Jericho (6.1ff.), Ai (7.2ff.), Jerusalem (10.3), not itself taken, Hebron (10.36; but cf. 15.13-14, where it was taken by Caleb, and Jg. 1.10, where it was the objective of an attack by Judah), Jarmuth (10.3), Lachish (10.31), Eglon (10.34), Gezer (10.33), not itself taken, and Debir (10.38; but cf. 15.15-19; Jg. 1.11-15, which attribute its fall to Othniel).

**13b-16a.** The south-east and the Shephelah ('the lowland'), includes Libnah (10.29) and Makkedah (10.28) from the passage on the sequel to the campaign of Gibeon, and from an unknown source or from free composition, Geder (unknown and possibly a corruption of Gezer), Hormah (Num. 14.45; Jg. 1.16-17, on which see), Arad (Num. 21.1; Jg. 1.16-17, on which see)=Tell 'Arad c. 23 miles E. of Beersheba, and Adullam (Gen. 38.1; 1 Sam. 22.1)=Tell Sheikh Madhkūr by Khirbet 'Id el-Mā, which may preserve the ancient name, c. 10 miles ENE. of Beit Jibrin.

one; the king of Arad, one; <sup>15</sup> the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adul'lam, one; <sup>16</sup> the king of Makke'dah, one; the king of Bethel, one; <sup>17</sup> the king of Tap'pu-ah, one; the king of Hephher, one; <sup>18</sup> the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lashar'on, one; <sup>19</sup> the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; <sup>20</sup> the king of Shim'ron-meron, one; the king of Ach'shaph, one; <sup>21</sup> the king of Ta'anach, one; the king of Megid'do, one; <sup>22</sup> the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jok'ne-am in Carmel, one; <sup>23</sup> the king of Dor in Naphath-dor, one; the king of Goi'im in Galilee, one; <sup>24</sup> the king of Tirzah, one: in all, thirty-one kings.

**16b-18.** The central highlands and coastal plain, include **Bethel** (8.17); **Tappuah** (16.8)=Tell Sheikh Abū Zarad by Yasūf (cf. 17.7 (LXX)), c. 8 miles SSW. of Nāblus; **Hephher**=et-Ṭayibeh, c. 3½ miles S. of Ṭulkarm according to Alt KS I, 1953, p. 128n.), but probably secondary, being found as a clan in 17.2 (cf. Num. 26.32ff.); cf. 'the land of Hephher' in Solomon's third fiscal district (1 Kg. 4.10); **Aphek**, the Philistine base in their advance to the great central plain in 1 Sam. 4.1, usually identified with Rās el-'Ain, as the name Aphek ('Spring') suggests; but the ancient *tell* there being unoccupied in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages, Noth (op. cit., p. 72) proposes Tell Mukhmār 2½ miles NW. of Rās el-'Ain and c. 12 miles W. of Jaffa. **Lasharon** ('belonging to Sharon') is not the seat of a king, but, as LXX implies, it defines Aphek, which, being a fairly common place-name, requires such definition.

**19-23.** Galilee, includes **Madon**, **Hazor**, **Shimron-meron**, and **Achshaph** from 11.1-2; **Taanach** (17.11, 21.25)=Tell Ta'anek 24 miles SE. of Haifa at the north-east end of a pass through the south-east extension of the Carmel ridge; **Megiddo** (17.11)=Tell el-Mutesellim commanding a main pass through the same hills from the coastal plain to the great central plain c. 5 miles NW. of Taanach; **Kedesh** (19.37)=Qedeis in Upper Galilee 11 miles N. of Safed, and so out of context here, like Tirzah (verse 24); **Jokneam in Carmel** (19.11, 21.34)=Tell Qeimūn, commanding the most westerly pass through the hills from the coastal plain to the great central plain 6 miles NW. of Megiddo; **Dor** in the north of the plain of Sharon (see on 11.2); **Goiim in Galilee** ('nations in Galilee') possibly a scribal corruption of 'Harosheth ha-goiim in Galilee'; (cf. Jg. 4.2ff.) at the western end of the great central plain, possibly Tell el-'Amār or Tell el-Harbaj by el-Hārithiyeh, c. 8 miles SE. of Haifa, which may have preserved the ancient name. On Galilee see on 15.7.

**24. Tirzah** (Tell el-Far'a, c. 7 miles NE. of Nāblus) stands strangely at the end of the list quite out of context, and is obviously secondary.

**13** Now Joshua was old and advanced in years; and the LORD said to him, 'You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to be possessed.<sup>a</sup> This is the land that yet remains: all the regions of the Philistines, and all those of the Gesh'urites<sup>a</sup> (from the Shihor, which is east of Egypt, northward to the boundary of Ekron, it is reckoned as Canaanite; there are five rulers of the Philistines, those of Gaza, Ashdod, Ash'kelon, Gath and

## 2. THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE LAND 13-21

(See General Introduction, pp. 22-32.) This, the second section of the Book of Joshua, previously thought to be the work of P, depends mainly upon much earlier sources. There were tribal boundary lists, which were defined in the pre-monarchic period and conserved in oral tradition and applied in tribal jurisdiction. These were to a considerable extent recognized in Solomon's administrative division of the realm (1 Kg. 4.7-19). Where these were non-existent or indefinite, as in the case of Simeon in the Negeb, the former territory of Dan after their northward migration, and the lands of the Galilean tribes, the Deuteronomic historian supplemented by town-lists from administrative documents of the monarchy, certainly from the time of Josiah (so Alt) and probably also from the time of Jehoshaphat (so G. E. Wright and F. M. Cross), and in Galilee, possibly from administrative lists of the Assyrian provinces in the late 8th and 7th centuries. The lists of cities of refuge (chapter 20), though probably not based on such a documentary source, preserve a tradition which could be as old as the settlement of the tribes, and the lists of Levitical settlements (chapter 21) may be based on the settlement of the Levites throughout the realm under David, Solomon, and Rehoboam (see General Introduction, pp. 26-31). The priority of Judah (14.6-15.63) and Joseph (16.1-17.18) reflects the status of these two as the main elements of the south and the north kingdom when that was a recent memory, which might suggest the end of the monarchy, when we should date the compilation of the Deuteronomic history as distinct from its post-exilic redaction (see General Introduction, p. 8).

Traditions of the tribal settlement are also incorporated in circumstantial narrative style, e.g. 14.6-13, 15.13-19 (cf. Jg. 1.11-15), 17.14-18. This is quite exceptional in chapters 13-21.

Those various elements were combined by the Deuteronomic historian, but editorial activity continued until the redaction of the work in the Exile, and certain of the more obvious interpolations, such as the role of Eleazar the priest in the apportionment, may be from the Priestly hand (see further, General Introduction, pp. 31f.).

## INTRODUCTION TO THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE LAND 13.1-33

The Deuteronomic historian is well aware that certain districts within the ideal

limits of the Promised Land which were included in his documentary sources from the administrative lists of the monarchy were not conquered in the days of the settlement, and this is specially mentioned (verses 2-6).

**1. advanced in years:** the same verb is used of the setting of the sun. In 24.29 Joshua is said to be 110 at his death.

**remains:** this may have referred to districts within Palestine yet to be subdued (cf. 15.14-19); cf. Jg. 1.10-15; Jos. 15.63, 16.10, 17.11-13, and generally in Judges 1). This, however, has been misunderstood. First the inclusion of cities in the Philistine plain in administrative lists from the time of Josiah used by the Deuteronomic historian for his description of the territory of Judah suggests the inclusion of this district as yet to be conquered in verses 2-4, excluding the asyndetic 'it is reckoned as Canaanite' and 'those of the Avvim in the South (cf. Dt. 2.23), all the land of the Canaanites' (verses 3b-4a). A later expansion mentioned Mearah ('the Cave') which belongs to the Sidonians (verse 4), perhaps the port of 'Athlit, behind which is Wādī el-Mughāreh ('Valley of the Cave'). This may have suggested Aphek beyond the Carmel Head in the plain of Acco (cf. 19.30=Jg. 1.31), perhaps confused with another Aphek, Tell el-Mukhmār by Rās el-'Ain, the limit of Philistine rule. A later redactor misunderstood this Aphek in conjunction with 'the Sidonians' as Afqā at the source of the River Adonis (Nahr Ibrāhīm) between Beirut and Byblos (Geba), hence the reference to Lebanon and adjacent districts in verses 5-6. The south border of Lebanon at Misrephoth-maim is possibly suggested by the representation of the occupation of Galilee in 11.8 (on which see). The primary reference of this passage to the Philistine country is indicated by the specific enumeration of their cities. The definition of Aphek with the regard to the boundary of the Amorites suggests the boundary between the Philistines and the Amorites in the foothills of the mountains of central Palestine, where the Amorites are specifically located (Num. 13.29; Jg. 1.34-36, on which see).

**2. regions:** Hebrew *g' lîlôt*. Possibly 'circuits', from the root *gālal* ('to roll'), but possibly from some unknown root; cf. 'Galilee', or 'Galilee of the nations', so-called if the root is *gālal* ('to roll'), from the great central plain ringed about with Canaanite fortresses, and secondarily including the hills to the north.

**Philistines:** *Pulusatu* mentioned among the 'Sea Peoples' in Egyptian records from the 15th to the 13th centuries, who were halted in their great trek through Syria and Palestine towards Egypt in the early part of the 12th century by Ramses III and settled in the coastal plain of Palestine, possibly as Egyptian vassals in a feudal system based on five great fiefs, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron, where they were settled before the consolidation of Israel, whom they effectively barred from the coastal plain.

**Geshurites:** probably a tribal name; cf. 1 Sam. 27.8, where they are located south-east of Gaza. They are not to be confused with the Geshurites of Hauran (verse 11; 12.5; Dt. 3.14).

**3. the Shihor:** an Egyptian word denoting a lagoon, or part of the eastern branch of the Delta, perhaps 'the Pool of Horus' on the Egyptian military road to



Ekron), and those of the Avvim, <sup>4</sup> in the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mear'ah which belongs to the Sido'nians, to Aphek, to the boundary of the Amorites, <sup>5</sup> and the land of the Geb'alites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Ba'al-gad below Mount Hermon to the entrance of Hamath, <sup>6</sup> all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Mis'rephoth-ma'im, even all the Sido'nians. I will myself drive them out from before the people of Israel; only allot the land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have com-

Palestine (L. Koehler, *ZAW* N.F. XIII, 1936, pp. 289-91; J. A. Wilson, *ANET*, 1950, p. 471).

**rulers:** Hebrew *s' rānīm*. Used in the Old Testament only of the Philistines, hence probably the Hebrew version of a Philistine word, thought to be the Greek *tyrannos* ('tyrant'), which would accord with the probable provenance of the Philistines and their associates from the Balkans, which a certain amount of archaeological evidence supports.

**Avvim:** cf. Dt. 2.23, where they are said to have been dispossessed by the Philistines in the vicinity of Gaza. There they are associated with 'enclosures' (*RSV* 'villages'), possibly dry-stone sheepfolds common in a region exposed to raiding. Such folds with converging entry-walls are illustrated in the Egyptian Narmer palette together with a walled fortress, from both of which Semites flee (*ANEP*, Pl. 296) (see further on verse 23).

**4. south:** lit. 'right hand', implying orientation to the east (cf. Yemen).

**Mearah:** see on verse 1.

**Aphek:** see on verse 1.

**5. A secondary expansion.** See on verse 1.

**Baal-gad below Mount Hermon:** see on 11.17.

**the entrance of Hamath:** the conventional description of the north boundary of Israel (cf. 1 Kg. 8.65; Amos 6.2); cf. Num. 13.21, 'from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob towards Hamath'. This definition probably originated with the description of the area controlled by David, who subjugated the Aramaeans about Damascus and in the valley of el-Biq'a between Lebanon and anti-Lebanon, but excluding Hamath on the Orontes, whose king Toi made a timely peace (2 Sam. 8.10). It is suggested that 'the entrance' (Hebrew *l' bō*) should be rendered as a place-name, i.e. Lebweh, c. 70 miles SW. of Hamā, but this may be a coincidence, and we prefer to render generally 'the Hamath approaches'. Except in the time of David this description of the north boundary of Israel was more apparent than real.

**6. I will myself drive them out:** ('will dispossess', thus causing others to possess). 'I' is emphatic, accentuating the antithesis between the piecemeal and incomplete conquest of Palestine and the conception of the occupation of the

manded you. <sup>7</sup> Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manas'seh.'

8 With the other half of the tribe of Manas'seh the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses the servant of the LORD gave them: <sup>9</sup> from Aro'er, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and the city that is in the middle of the valley, and all the tableland of Med'eba as far as Dibon; <sup>10</sup> and all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the boundary of the Ammonites; <sup>11</sup> and Gilead, and the region of the Gesh'urites and Ma-ac'athites, and all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan to Sal'ecah; <sup>12</sup> all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ash'taroth and in Ed're-i (he alone was left of the remnant of the

Promised Land by God's sovereign power and grace, the theme of the cult-legend of the central sanctuary of the sacral confederacy.

**only allot the land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have commanded you:** superfluous before verse 7, indicating a secondary insertion. In the apportionment only the Philistine districts in verses 2-6 are mentioned, which indicates that only those were part of the original expansion in verses 2-6 (see further, introduction to chapter 13).

#### *Brief Command to apportion the Land west of Jordan 7-14*

This is followed (verse 8 onwards) by a summary on the settlement in Transjordan. In the M.T. this seems a redactional digression prompted by the reference to the half-tribe of Manasseh among the western tribes in verse 7, half of Manasseh being settled with Reuben and Gad in Transjordan. The section ends with a note on the provision for Levi (verse 14), thus following the pattern of the description proper of the settlement of those tribes (verses 15-32, and 33), of which verses 8-14 are thus a redactional summary influenced also by Dt. 3.8, 10, 14. The note on Levi in verse 33 might seem a clear indication that the lists used by the Deuteronomic compiler ended with the list of the settlements of Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh in Transjordan, with the exceptional case of Levi as a logical appendix. The verse, however, which is omitted in LXX, may rather be a later, possibly Priestly, interpolation, being added after the notice on Levi in verses 8-14, which may be redactional (see further on verse 14). LXX, however, indicates a different Hebrew reading after 'the half-tribe of Manasseh' at the end of verse 7, 'from the Jordan to the Great Sea in the direction of the sunset will you give it. The Great Sea shall be the boundary. To the (two) tribes and to the half of the tribe of Manasseh, [to

Reph'aim); these Moses had defeated and driven out.<sup>13</sup> Yet the people of Israel did not drive out the Gesh'urites or the Ma-ac'athites; but Geshur and Ma'acath dwell in the midst of Israel to this day.

14 To the tribe of Levi alone Moses gave no inheritance; the offerings by fire to the LORD God of Israel are their inheritance, as he said to him.

15 And Moses gave an inheritance to the tribe of the Reubenites according to their families.<sup>16</sup> So their territory was from Aro'er, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and the city that is

Reuben and to Gad Moses gave (their portion) beyond Jordan . . .]. This implies an omission in M.T. The nucleus of the passage may have thus been from the compiler, but it has been expanded by redactional gloss.

For topographical details and affinities with the Pentateuch see on 12.4-6 and verses 15-32.

14. If the lists of tribal settlements originally ended with the Transjordan tribes, this would be a natural place to note the provision for the Levites, but the abrupt introduction of the verse with its exceptive particle strongly suggests a redactional interpolation after Dt. 18.1, as does the treatment of Levi as a tribe; cf. the more natural reference to 'the Levites' in 14.3, without the exceptive particle.

**offerings by fire:** (Hebrew *'iššim*), the priestly perquisites (Dt. 18.1; 1 Sam. 2.28). The word is understood in the Old Testament as derived from *'ēš* ('fire'), but the double consonant makes this doubtful. LXX omits the word, as M.T. does in verse 33, reading 'the Lord, the God of Israel is his inheritance', a theologoumenon which suggests a late interpolation (cf. Num. 18.20 (P); Dt. 10.9, 18.2 (redactional); Ezek. 36.12).

#### *The Apportionment to Reuben, Gad, and Half-Manasseh 15-32*

Cf. Num. 32.34-38. See introduction to chapter 13.

15-23. **Reuben:** (tribal boundary incomplete, verses 16-17a, 23, supplemented by town-list from the monarchy, 17b-20, with redactional expansion, verses 21-22 after Deuteronomy and Num. 31.8ff.).

16. **Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon:** apparently the south-east boundary-point (see on 12.2).

**the city that is the middle of the valley:** probably the south-west boundary-point (see on 12.2).

**Medeba . . . Heshbon** (verse 17) define the eastern boundary, Heshbon being the north-east boundary-point, as verse 26 indicates. Medeba is the populous town of Mādabā 20 miles SW. of 'Ammān, and Heshbon is at, or by, Ḥesbān, six miles farther north (see on 9.10).

in the middle of the valley, and all the tableland by Med'eba;<sup>17</sup> with Heshbon, and all its cities that are in the tableland; Dibon, and Ba'moth-ba'al, and Beth-ba'al-me'on,<sup>18</sup> and Jahaz, and Ked'emoth, and Meph'a-ath,<sup>19</sup> and Kiriatha'im, and Sibmah, and Zer'eth-shahar on the hill of the valley,<sup>20</sup> and Beth-pe'or, and the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth-jesh'imoth,<sup>21</sup> that is, all the cities of the tableland,

**17. all its cities that are in the tableland:** i.e. the large fertile plain on the plateau between the escarpment above the Dead Sea and the desert. This visualizes Heshbon as the capital of Sihon's kingdom, and may indicate the adaptation of town-lists from the monarchy to tribal boundary-lists by the Deuteronomic compiler (so Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 79).

**17-20. Dibon:** cf. Num. 32.34, in the south of the plain south of Heshbon, the native place of King Mesha, whose inscription (c. 835 B.C.) was found there. Of the other settlements few are conspicuous. **Beth-baal-meon** is probably Mā'in c. 5 miles SW. of Mādabā, being mentioned with Qiryathān (Kiriathaim, verse 19) in Mesha's inscription (l. 10), which is thus not Khirbet el-Qureiyāt (Keriyoth, Mesha's capital south of the Arnon, mentioned in Mesha's inscription, l. 13), but in the vicinity of Mādabā, where Eusebius locates it ten Roman miles westward. **Sibmah** (verse 19) is located by A. Musil at Khirbet Sūmiyeh, c. 5 miles NW. of Heshbon, which is the proper direction, but not the proper site, as the archaeological débris indicates; cf. Noth's location (*op. cit.*, 79-80) after Glueck at Khirbet Qurn el-Kibsh, c. 6½ miles NW. of Mādabā.

**19. Zereth-shahar on the hill of the valley,** 'the hill of the valley' (Hebrew *hā-ēmeḳ*), is probably the mountain overlooking the lower Jordan valley, to which only the Hebrew word *ēmeḳ* is applicable in this region. This would be the Pisgah massif (cf. verse 20), of which the highest point is Mount Nebo, identified traditionally with Rās es-Siyāghah. This, and the association with **Kiriathaim** and **Sibmah**, suggests the location of Zereth-shahar there.

**20. Beth-peor:** located by Eusebius six Roman miles above Livias (Tell er-Rāmah) in the Jordan valley east of the lower Jordan, hence in the plain watered by 'the off-flow from Pisgah' (see on 10.40), with which it is associated in the tradition of Moses' burial (Dt. 34.6). It was probably on the slopes of the mountain mass, from which it overlooked the valley of the lower Jordan (Num. 23.28). It was also a sanctuary (Num. 25.1-3), where the Israelites cohabited with the women of Moab. This indicates perhaps its significance as a boundary shrine in the early days of the Hebrew settlement.

**Beth-jeshimoth:** probably Tell el-'Azeimeh, two miles east-north-east of Khirbet es-Suweimeh in the plain east of the lower Jordan (see on 12.3).

**21-22.** Redactional after Num. 31.8.



and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses defeated with the leaders of Mid'ian, Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the princes of Sihon, who dwelt in the land. <sup>22</sup> Balaam also, the son of Be'or, the soothsayer, the people of Israel killed with the sword among the rest of their slain. <sup>23</sup> And the border of the people of Reuben was the Jordan as a boundary. This was the inheritance of the Reubenites, according to their families with their cities and villages.

24 And Moses gave an inheritance also to the tribe of the Gadites, according to their families. <sup>25</sup> Their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites, to Aro'er, which is east of Rabbah, <sup>26</sup> and from Heshbon to Ra'math-miz'peh and Bet'onim, and from Mahana'im to the territory of Debir, <sup>27</sup> and in

23. **villages:** 'enclosures', sheepfolds or the like, from a root better known in this sense in Arabic (see on verse 3). These folds with converging entry-walls to facilitate gathering in raids from the desert are still a feature of the region (Eissfeldt, 'Gabelhürden im Ostjordanland', *F. und F.* XXV, 1949, pp. 9-11).

#### Gad 24-28

The town-list of Gad is not at all full except in the Jordan valley (verse 27a), in spite of the notice of 'all the cities of Gilead', which may have headed such a list. Here the tribal land is described first by districts. **Jazer** (verse 25) is probably a district rather than a town (cf. Num. 21.32) in the region probably south of es-Salt. **Gilead** (verse 25) is here, as the definite article indicates, a common noun, a geographical term, conserved in the Jebel Jil'ad, 16 miles NW. of 'Ammān, and according to its complement 'half the land of the Ammonites'. In this context **Aroer** (verse 25), which is defined as east of Rabbah ('Ammān), which in this case means rather 'opposite' and actually to the west, as distinct from Aroer on the edge of the Arnon gorge, defined the border between Ammon and Gad in the south-east. **Heshbon** (verse 26) is given as a boundary-point between Reuben and Gad. **Ramath-mizpah** (verse 26) seems another such boundary-point, probably just west of 'Ammān, hence not far from Aroer, and **Betonim** (verse 26) is feasibly identified with Khirbet Baṭneh, c. 3½ miles SSW. of es-Salt, where archaeological debris supports the location (de Vaux, *RB* XLVII, 1938, p. 404). **Mahanaim** (verse 26) is probably the seat of Saul's family after Gilboa and the place to which David retreated at Absalom's revolt (2 Sam. 17.24ff.), hence not far east of the Jordan valley (2 Sam. 18.23, 26), so possibly Tell Hajjā, c. 2 miles S. of Tulū edh-Dhahab just south of the lower Jabbok. **Debir** (verse 26) (*RSV* after LXX,

the valley Beth-ha'ram, Beth-nim'rah, Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, having the Jordan as a boundary, to the lower end of the Sea of Chin'nereth, eastward beyond the Jordan.<sup>28</sup> This is the inheritance of the Gadites according to their families, with their cities and villages.

29 And Moses gave an inheritance to the half-tribe of Manas'seh; it was allotted to the half-tribe of the Manas'sites according to their

Syriac, and Vulgate for M.T. Lidebir) is unknown in the Old Testament in this region. If Lidebir is read, the place may be Lodebar of 2 Sam. 9.4ff. and 2 Sam. 17.27, which was closely associated with Mahanaim. The valley (*hā-ēmekē*) (cf. on verse 19) refers to the lower Jordan valley east of the river. Here the compiler uses the town-list, the items running from south to north. Beth-nimrah seems to be preserved in the Wādī Nimrīn, the lower part of the Wādī esh-Shuweib, followed by the road from Jericho to 'Ammān over the Allenby Bridge, where Tell Nimrīn is the successor to Beth-nimrah at Tell Buleibil, as archaeological debris indicates (Glueck, *Explorations in Eastern Palestine*, IV, 1951, pp. 347ff.). Succoth (verse 27) may be Khirbet Deir 'Allā, just 7 miles NW. of the mouth of the Jabbok, associated with bronze-casting in the time of Solomon (1 Kg. 7.46). The excavations of H. J. Franken (*VT* X, 1960, pp. 286-93) have revealed traces of metallurgy here and at other sites in the vicinity. Zaphon (verse 27) must be still farther north. No northern boundary is described, which indicates that the area ascribed to Gad ran to a narrow point at the southern end of the Sea of Galilee (the Sea of Chinnereth, verse 27; cf. Dt. 3.17).

the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon is a redactional gloss.

#### *East Manasseh 29-31*

The only fixed boundary-point is 'from Mahanaim' (verse 30), the boundary with Gad, and there is no town-list, perhaps because none was available to the compiler. The lack of a boundary-list may be due to the fact that the Israelite settlement in this area was not effected in the pre-monarchic period, when tribal jurisdictions were important, but in the monarchy as a colonizing movement to relieve congestion west of the Jordan; cf. Elijah as one of 'the settlers of Gilead' (1 Kg. 17.1). Otherwise the land is described in regions.

The fluctuations of fortune in the Syrian wars may explain the lack of fixed boundaries and town-lists in this area. Otherwise the land is described in regions, all Bashan (verse 30), to which the whole kingdom of Og king of Bashan and Ashtaroth and Edrei, the cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan are probably redactional glosses, and half Gilead (verse 31), presumably the hill-country north of the lower Jabbok.

families. <sup>30</sup> Their region extended from Mahana'im, through all Bashan, the whole kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Ja'ir, which are in Bashan, sixty cities, <sup>31</sup> and half Gilead, and Ash'taroth, and Ed're-i, the cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan; these were allotted to the people of Machir the son of Manas'seh for the half of the Machirites according to their families.

<sup>32</sup> These are the inheritances which Moses distributed in the plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan east of Jericho. <sup>33</sup> But to the tribe of Levi Moses gave no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel is their inheritance, as he said to them.

**14** And these are the inheritances which the people of Israel received in the land of Canaan, which Elea'zar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel distributed to them. <sup>2</sup> Their inheritance was by lot, as the LORD had commanded Moses for the nine and one-half tribes. <sup>3</sup> For Moses had given an inheritance to the two and one-half tribes beyond the Jordan; but to the Levites he gave no

**30. towns of Jair:** better, 'tent-agglomerations of J.', who is reckoned as the son of Manasseh in Dt. 3.14. Twenty-three cities are assigned to him in 1 Chr. 2.22 (cf. Jg. 10.4, where he is associated with Gilead with thirty cities called 'the tent-agglomerations of J.'). Perhaps there is a fortuitous association here between the Judge and the place-name.

**31. for half of the Machirites:** probably a corrective gloss after Num. 26.29, where all Manassites are sons of Machir.

**32.** The regular closing formula in the apportionment of the land.

**33.** See on verse 14.

#### THE INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA'S APPORTIONMENT OF THE LAND WEST OF JORDAN, CALEB'S CLAIM ON HEBRON 14.1-15

The chapter emphasizes very clearly the theological purpose of the Deuteronomic historian. Parts of an older tradition are incorporated which depict the occupation as on the initiative of Israel and even of the tribes acting independently, as in Judges 1, e.g. 'these are the inheritances which the people of Israel took' (verse 12; cf. verse 5a). This is already evidenced in Caleb's exploit against Hebron, which is implied in verse 12b and explicitly narrated in 15.14-15 with its sequel in his kinsman Othniel's exploit at Debir (15.16-19=Jg. 1.12-15). Caleb's exploit,

however, is deliberately and somewhat artificially related to the allotment by Joshua at Gilgal in congruity with the theological conception of the occupation of the Promised Land by the Power and Grace of God, which the Deuteronomic historian inherited from the pre-Deuteronomic compilation based on the cult-legend of the central shrine of Gilgal.

The passage on Caleb's occupation of Hebron has a manifold significance, especially if, as seems feasible, Noth (op. cit., p. 85) is right in seeing it in its present context detached from the passage on the Anakim of Hebron and district in 11.21 in the Book of Joshua or, from what seems its proper context in Judges 1. At 14.6b-15 it is partly an aetiological tradition explaining how it was that Hebron, with its intimate associations with the Hebrew patriarchs and with David, should be 'the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day' (verse 14). The mention of the fact that Caleb was a Kenizzite is not fortuitous. This people, partly affiliated with the Hebrews (1 Chr. 4.13, LXX) was also affiliated with the Edomites (Gen. 36.11, 42). Thus there is an apologetic aspect to the aetiological narrative. The Kenizzite is invested with his title by Joshua at the central sanctuary of the Israelite confederacy at Gilgal. This, like the awkward ascription of the same exploit to Judah (Jg. 1.10-11; cf. Jos. 15.14-15), satisfied the Israelite pride and orthodoxy. That is why the Deuteronomic historian subsumes the incident here, again awkwardly, under the allotment to Judah (chapter 15). The tradition of Caleb's occupation of Hebron is associated with the reconnaissance of Canaan from Kadesh (Num. 13, esp. 30ff.), which may well be a Kenizzite hero-legend, to emphasize that the inheritance of the Promised Land involved responsibilities and merits. By steadfast faith and courage such as Caleb's it was merited, and by the same virtues under divine economy it would be held. The Deuteronomic history of Israel's inheritance and forfeiture of the Promised Land is largely dominated by that theme.

#### *General Introduction to Joshua's Apportionment 1-5*

The original tradition that the various elements of Israel themselves took their territories (verses 1a, 5b) has been overworked by the Deuteronomic historian to assign that role to Joshua. Eleazar the priest, the son and successor of Aaron (Dt. 10.6), is further added after the tradition which assigns him the task of dividing the land with Joshua and representatives from each tribe (Num. 34.16-29, P) by lot (Num. 26.53-56; 33.54, P). On a variant, and more specific, account of the apportionment of the land to all the western tribes but Judah and Joseph at Shiloh, cf. chapter 18, esp. 6, 8-10. The specification of the nine and a half tribes and the statement of the apportionment in Transjordan, the note on the division of Joseph, and on Levi (verse 4) is added to explain how the twelve tribe convention was observed.

**1. the heads of the fathers' houses:** a phrase characteristic of P (cf. 22.14) where they are called *n'šš'im*, on which see 9.18.

**2. as the LORD commanded Moses:** see Num. 34.13ff.



inheritance among them. <sup>4</sup> For the people of Joseph were two tribes, Manas'sch and E'phraim; and no portion was given to the Levites in the land, but only cities to dwell in, with their pasture lands for their cattle and their substance. <sup>5</sup> The people of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses; they allotted the land.

6 Then the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal; and Caleb the son of Jephun'neh the Ken'izzite said to him, 'You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God in Ka'desh-bar'nea concerning you and me. <sup>7</sup> I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Ka'desh-bar'nea to spy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in my heart. <sup>8</sup> But my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt; yet I wholly followed the LORD my God. <sup>9</sup> And Moses swore on that day, saying, "Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your children for ever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God." <sup>10</sup> And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as he said, these forty-five years since the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness; and now, lo, I am this day eighty-five years old. <sup>11</sup> I am still as strong to this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then, for war, and for going and

4. to the Levites . . . cities to dwell in: see on chapter 21 and General Introduction, pp. 26-31 (cf. Num. 35.1-8; Lev. 25.32-34).

pasture lands: to which cattle are 'driven out', as the root implies.

#### *Caleb's Claim to Hebron 6-12*

See Introduction to chapter 14, pp. 136f. The incident is recorded in Num. 13.1-14.38.

6. Kadesh-barnea: 'Ain Qudeirāt in North Sinai (see on 10.41).

7. forty is the conventional indefinite number of Semitic folklore. It indicates a man in his prime, cf. forty years' wandering (verse 10), after which, allowing five years for the period after the arrival in Palestine, Caleb's age is given as eighty-five (verse 10).

as it was in my heart: what he sincerely thought (cf. Ps. 15.2).

8. made the heart of the people melt: cf. Deuteronomic phraseology in 2.11.

11. for going and coming: lit. 'for going out and coming in', perhaps an idiom for 'war service', as the sequel to the phrase in Dt. 28.6 indicates.

coming.<sup>13</sup> So now give me this hill country of which the LORD spoke on that day; for you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities: it may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out as the LORD said.'

13 Then Joshua blessed him; and he gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephun'neh for an inheritance.<sup>14</sup> So Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephun'neh the Ken'izzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD, the God of Israel.<sup>15</sup> Now the name of Hebron formerly was Kir'iath-ar'ba; this Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. And the land had rest from war.

**15** The lot for the tribe of the people of Judah according to their families reached southward to the boundary of Edom, to the

**12. this hill country:** i.e. about Hebron, immediately north of which the land rises to just over 3,000 feet above sea-level. The demonstrative indicates that the passage is out of its context at Gilgal and supports Noth's contention (op. cit., pp. 83-85) that it is the sequel to 11.21-22, noting the further point that both 11.23b and 14.15 end rather oddly in their context in Joshua with the statement that 'the land had rest from war'. This suggests affinity with the hero-legends as arranged by the Deuteronomic historian in Judges, especially Judges 1, to which 15.14-19 also belongs (cf. Jg. 1.10-15).

**Anakim:** a pseudo-gentile (see on 11.21).

**fortified cities:** see on 10.20.

**14. Caleb . . . the Kenizzite:** see Introduction to chapter 14, pp. 136f.

**to this day:** the hallmark of the aetiological tradition (see Introduction to chapter 14, p. 137).

**15. Kiriath-arba:** Hebrew 'the City of Four' (see on 10.3). Hebrew tradition assumed an eponymous hero Arba (15.13), an alternative tradition being the association of this chief with three others, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi with Hebron (15.14; cf. Num. 13.22), whose names suggest Aramaeans; cf. Talmi of Geshur (2 Sam. 3.3, 13.37). Underlying this tradition there may be such a situation as that implied in the Egyptian Execration Texts, which, probably implying a stage before the sedentarization of Amorite tribes, note three chiefs associated with Ashkelon and two with Jerusalem. Further, we might suggest that the name implies the importance of Hebron as a boundary shrine where four groups were associated, e.g. Kenizzites, Kenites, Jerahmeelites, and Judah.

#### THE INHERITANCE OF JUDAH 15.1-63

On sources, see General Introduction, pp. 23-25. The boundary-points (verses

wilderness of Zin at the farthest south. <sup>2</sup>And their south boundary ran from the end of the Salt Sea, from the bay that faces southward; <sup>3</sup> it goes out southward of the ascent of Akrah'bim, passes along to Zin, and goes up south of Ka'desh-bar'nea, along by Hezron, up to

1-12), like those of the other tribal territories, are based on a tradition from the pre-monarchic period, as their partial recognition in Solomon's fiscal divisions (1 Kg. 4.7-19) indicates, but in the case of Judah, those reflect later conditions in the time of Josiah, when the Philistine plain was incorporated. Within the realm of Judah, and with respect to the affiliation of the Kenizzites and Judah in pre-monarchic times, the occupation of Hebron by Caleb and of Debir (Kiriath-sepher) by Othniel is described in what is really an aetiological saga, explaining a land-settlement between two Kenizzite clans represented by Caleb of Hebron and Othniel of Debir. Town-lists are grouped according to the four physical regions, the South, or Negeb (verses 21a-32), the foothills, or the Shephelah (verses 33-47), the hill country (verses 48-60), the wilderness east of the watershed to the Dead Sea and the lower Jordan valley (verses 61-62), and according to twelve fiscal districts of the realm of Judah, probably reflecting a regional division under Solomon with later adjustments under Jehoshaphat (verses 61-62) and under Josiah. This is indicated especially by the home district (verse 60); here only Kiriath-jearim and Rabbah are mentioned, but included are the towns in the district immediately north of Jerusalem reckoned to Benjamin, which includes Kiriath-jearim (18.28, LXX and Syriac versions). Those administrative districts also were to a certain extent based on physical regions (Alt, 'Judas Gaue unter Josia', KS II, 1959, pp. 276-88).

1. **Edom:** the district of Mount Seir, west of the Arabah (Dt. 1.2), as the town-lists indicate, probably reflecting the period of Josiah, by which time Judah had lost control of Edom east of the Arabah and of Ezion-geber on the Gulf of 'Aqaba. **the wilderness of Zin:** between the watershed to the Arabah, which was 'Mount Seir', and Kadesh, which was in Zin (Dt. 32.51).

2. **bay:** lit. 'tongue' (cf. verse 5; 18.19; Isa. 11.15).

3. **the ascent of Akrahbim:** Num. 34.4; 'Scorpion Pass', giving access from the Arabah by the important and rare spring of 'Ain Huṣṣ, south-east of Kurnūb (Byzantine Mampris). For illustration see A. D. Baly, *The Geography of the Bible*, 1957, Pl. 9. This was the pathway of the caravans as far back as the fourth millennium B.C., which transported raw copper from Feinān (Punon) on the east side of the Arabah to Tell Abū Maṭar, the Chalcolithic site by Beersheba (N. Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert*, 1959, p. 89). The importance of this pass, modern Naqb Sefei, is attested by three stations from the Nabataean, Roman Imperial, and Byzantine periods (Glueck, op. cit., pp. 205-7).

**Kadesh-barnea:** probably the district rather than the particular settlement of 'Ain Qudeirāt (see on 10.41).

Addar, turns about to Karka, <sup>4</sup> passes along to Azmon, goes out by the Brook of Egypt, and comes to its end at the sea. This shall be your south boundary. <sup>5</sup> And the east boundary is the Salt Sea, to the mouth of the Jordan. And the boundary on the north side runs from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan; <sup>6</sup> and the boundary goes up to Beth-hoglah, and passes along north of Beth-arabah; and the boundary goes up to the Stone of Bohan the son of Reuben; <sup>7</sup> and the boundary goes up to Debir from the Valley of Achor, and so northward, turning toward Gilgal, which is opposite the ascent of

**Hezron . . . Addar:** probably a scribal corruption or misunderstanding of Hazar-Addar 'the Folds of Addar' (Num. 34.4), *ḥ<sup>a</sup>ṣar* being a common element in place-names in the steppe (see further on 13.3, 23).

**Karka:** (Hebrew *ḳarkā*). Actually, as the definite article indicates, a common noun, lit. 'floor'; cf. the sea-bottom in Am. 9.3, which suggests to us mud-flats (Arabic *ḳa'ḳa'*), which are a feature of basins in the southern steppe, well illustrated in B. Rothenberg, *God's Wilderness*, 1961, Pl. 30.

**4. Azmon:** modern Qūṣimeh, an important watering-station between Beer-sheba and Egypt, c. 5 miles W. of 'Ain Qudeirāt.

**the Brook of Egypt:** (Hebrew *naḥal miṣraim*). The Wādī el-'Arīsh, south of Gaza, where the Assyrian records mention a place, Naḥalmuṣur.

This extent of the southern border of the tribal territory of Judah from the southern end of the Dead Sea south and west to the Mediterranean, if it refers to conditions before the monarchy, must refer to areas occupied by semi-nomads like the Jerahmeelites, Kenites, and Kenizzites (Noth, op. cit., p. 89), who were affiliated with Judah. If it is intended to include the Philistine plain, it would reflect the extent of Josiah's realm between the decline of Assyria and his death in 609 B.C.

**6. Beth-hoglah:** 'Ain Ḥajla by the ford of that name, c. 6 miles SE. of modern Jericho.

**Beth-arabah:** probably 'Ain el-Gharbeh, north of the Wādī Qelt, which runs south-east from Jericho (Alt, *PJB* XXII, 1926, pp. 34ff.).

**the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben:** Reuben is thus attested as at one time west of Jordan (see on 1.12-18). The stone of Bohan, unknown, may have been a natural pinnacle of rock which suggested a thumb (*bōhen*). Such a conspicuous natural feature is often considered by local Arabs as the abode of a *wēlī*, or numen. There is such a *wēlī* at the desert sanctuary of Nebī Mūsā, near where the stone of Bohan is to be located.

**7. Debir:** unknown, possibly associated with grazings, as the etymology may suggest.

**the Valley of Achor:** el-Buqei'a (see on 7.24).



Adum'mim, which is on the south side of the valley; and the boundary passes along to the waters of En-she'mesh, and ends at En-ro'gel; <sup>8</sup> then the boundary goes up by the valley of the son of Hinnom at the southern shoulder of the Jeb'usite (that is, Jerusalem); and the boundary goes up to the top of the mountain that lies over

**Gilgal:** certainly not the amphictyonic sanctuary of Gilgal north-east of Jericho, but by Adummim (Ṭal'at ed-Damm, 'the Ascent of Blood') on the modern road from Jericho to Jerusalem and south of the Wādī (Qelt). The reading Gilgal is questionable; cf. 18.17, which reads *g'ḥilôt*, a common noun expressing a physical feature, the significance of which is unknown (cf. 13.2).

**the waters of En-shemesh:** probably 'Ain el-Hūd, the strong spring just east of el-'Azariyeh (Bethany).

**En-rogel:** (cf. 2 Sam. 17.17; 1 Kg. 1.9). Bir 'Ayyūb, south of ancient Jerusalem, below the confluence of the Kidron valley and the valley of the Son of Hinnom (Wādī er-Rabābi).

**8. at the southern shoulder of the Jebusite (that is, Jerusalem):** the south-west hill, divided from Jerusalem proper by the central valley (Josephus' Tyropoeon valley). The inclusion of the whole south-west hill in the fortified area of Jerusalem cannot be demonstrated before the time of Herod, who built his great palace-fort at the north-west summit on the site of the Turkish Citadel by the Jaffa Gate. The careful delimitation between Jerusalem and the tribal territory of Judah at this point might seem to reflect the distinction which persisted throughout the monarchy, as repeated references to 'Jerusalem and Judah' indicate, i.e. the crown possession of the House of David and the territory of Judah. The unnatural separation of Jerusalem from the arable land in the Plain of the Rephaim west of the valley of Hinnom, however, probably indicates the penetration of Judah from the south before the fall of the city itself to David's kinsman Joab; cf. the case of Tappuah (17.7-8), where the occupation of the settlement by Ephraim and of the lands by Manasseh indicates the resistance and eventual fall of the Canaanite principality after the Israelite tribe had first infiltrated into, and occupied, the lands (Alt, 'Das System der Stammesgrenzen im Buche Josua', KS I, 1953, p. 200). The precise significance here and the general ethnic connotation of 'Jebusite' is unknown. The word is glossed by 'that is Jerusalem'. The view of Dalman ought to be cited that 'Jerusalem' specifically applied to the south-west hill as distinct from 'Zion', which was the south-east hill and its Solomonic extension northwards. **the mountain that lies over against the valley of Hinnom, on the west, at the northern end of the valley of Rephaim:** the high ground now occupied by the King David Hotel and the Y.M.C.A. building. The valley of the Rephaim, the only appreciable tract of arable land in the vicinity of Jerusalem, is the plain around the modern railway station, the Biq'a.

against the valley of Hinnom, on the west, at the northern end of the valley of Reph'aim; <sup>9</sup> then the boundary extends from the top of the mountain to the spring of the Waters of Nephto'ah, and from there to the cities of Mount Ephron; then the boundary bends round to Ba'alāh (that is, Kir'iath-je'arim); <sup>10</sup> and the boundary circles west of Ba'alāh to Mount Se'ir, passes along to the northern shoulder of Mount Je'arim (that is, Ches'alōn), and goes down to Beth-she'mesh, and passes along by Timnah; <sup>11</sup> the boundary goes out to the shoulder of the hill north of Ekron, then the boundary bends round to Shik'keron and passes along to Mount Ba'alāh, and goes out to Jabneel; then the boundary comes to an end at the sea. <sup>12</sup> And the west boundary was the Great Sea with its coast-line. This is the boundary round about the people of Judah according to their families.

13 According to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, he gave to Caleb the son of Jephun'neh a portion among the people of Judah, Kir'iath-ar'ba, that is, Hebron (Arba was the father of

**9. the spring of the Waters of Nephtoah:** (Hebrew *ma'yan mé neptōah*). Cf. 18.15; 'Ain Liftā, just beyond the north-west edge of modern Jerusalem on the upper course of the Wādī eṣ-Ṣarār (Vale of Sorek). It may be 'the Wells of Merneptah (or Mineptah), which is in the mountain range' in a 13th-century Egyptian papyrus (J. A. Wilson, *ANET*, p. 258).

**Mount Ephron:** not certainly known. The direction is roughly that of the modern highway to Jaffa above the south bank of the Wādī eṣ-Ṣarār towards Kiriath-jearim (Qiryat el-'Ainab, also called Abū Ghōsh). On our reading 'it went out to Moṣa, a city of Mount Ephron' for 'it went out to the cities of Mount Ephron' see on 18.15.

**Baalāh:** possibly a scribal corruption of a compound place-name introduced by Baalath- ('goddess of . . .') at or near Kiriath-jearim, as is suggested by the gloss that is Kiriath-jearim.

**10. Beth-shemesh:** Tell er-Rumeileh by 'Ain Shems, south of the lower course of the Wādī eṣ-Ṣarār.

**Timnah:** Khirbet et-Tibneh, lower down the wādī. See on Jg. 14.1.

**11. Ekron:** 'Aqir, c. 16 miles SE. of Jaffa.

**Shikkeron . . . Mount Baalāh:** unknown and textually doubtful.

**Jabneel:** Yibneh, Roman Jamnia on the Mandatory railway, c. 12 miles S. of Jaffa. The inclusion of the north part of the Philistine plain to the sea (verse 12) indicates a date after Josiah's nationalist revival on the decline of Assyria.

Anak). <sup>14</sup>And Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak, She'shai and Ah'man and Talmi, the descendants of Anak. <sup>15</sup>And he went up from there against the inhabitants of Debir; now the name of Debir formerly was Kir'iat-se'pher. <sup>16</sup>And Caleb said, 'Whoever smites Kir'iat-se'pher, and takes it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter as wife.' <sup>17</sup>And Oth'ni-el the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. <sup>18</sup>When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field; and she alighted from her ass, and Caleb said to her, 'What do you wish?' <sup>19</sup>She said to him, 'Give me a present; since you have set me in the land of the Negeb, give me also springs of water.' And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

*The Kenizzite Occupation of Hebron and Debir (Kiriath-sepher) 13-19*

Cf. Jg. 1.10-15. See Introduction to chapters 14 and 15. On place-names and personalities, see on 14.6-15.

**15. Debir (Kiriath-sepher):** see on 10.38. *sēper* in Hebrew means generally 'a book' or 'record', and there may be a reference to registration in the Egyptian or Solomonic administration. Alternatively the word may be the corruption of a Canaanite cognate of Akkadian *sippur* ('copper'), so far unattested. *D'bir* generally signifies 'inmost shrine', but not 'shrine' in general, so that in a place-name (cf. 13.26) it may rather signify 'grazing-grounds'.

**16. Achsah:** possibly represents a local or tribal dependent of the powerful Caleb clan of Hebron, which was affiliated with the kindred clan of Othniel after the occupation of Debir. Because of the settlement of water rights between Hebron and Debir, Noth (*JPOS* XV, 1935, pp. 48-49) suggests that the latter site was near at least the lands of Hebron and shared a common water system, which would be admirably suited by Khirbet et-Ṭarrāmeḥ, just west of Seil ed-Dilbeh, c. 6 miles SW. of Hebron.

**18.** The tribal history takes here the form of popular saga, with charming personal touches, such as the bride's persuasion of her father. The verb *šānah*, rendered 'alighted', occurring only here and at Jg. 1.14 and Jg. 4.21, may mean rather 'clapped her hands' to attract attention; cf. Arabic *ṣahana*, cited by Koehler, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, p. 808.

**19. present:** (Hebrew *b'rākāh*), lit. 'a blessing', but also 'a present', a tangible manifestation of goodwill on the communication of the blessing of God in which a gift associates the two parties (cf. Gen. 33.11; 1 Sam. 25.27, 30.26; 2 Kg. 5.15). See the present writer's article, 'Blessing and Curse', *HDB*, one volume, 2nd ed., 1963, pp. 109-10.

20 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the people of Judah according to their families.<sup>21</sup> The cities belonging to the tribe of the people of Judah in the extreme South, toward the boundary of Edom, were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur,<sup>22</sup> Kinah, Dimo'nah, Ada'dah,<sup>23</sup> Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan,<sup>24</sup> Ziph, Telem, Be-a'loth,<sup>25</sup> Ha'zor-hadat'tah, Ker'i-oth-hezron (that is, Hazor),<sup>26</sup> Amam, Shema, Mola'dah,<sup>27</sup> Ha'zar-gad'dah, Heshmon, Beth-pel'et,<sup>28</sup> Hazar-shu'al, Beer-sheba, Biziothi'ah,<sup>29</sup> Ba'alalah, I'im, Ezem,<sup>30</sup> Elto'lad,

**Negeb:** root unknown. See on 10.40. The meaning is 'the dry steppe', as the present passage suggests.

**springs:** Hebrew *gullôṭ*, lit. 'bowls', e.g. on top of the pillars Jachin and Boaz in the Temple (1 Kg. 7.41-42) and in Ugaritic. Here 'basins' would be a better translation.

20. This verse reminds the reader that in spite of the digression on Caleb and Othniel occasioned by the incorporation *en bloc* of a narrative source, the subject is the settlement of Judah.

#### *Town-lists of Judah 21-62*

These are grouped in physical regions and administrative districts from the monarchy (see introduction to chapter 15). The inclusion of settlements in this list south of Beersheba in the tribal territory of Simeon (19.2-9) indicates that this is not from a tribal boundary-list, but from an official list of administrative districts in the kingdom of Judah.

21-32a. *District I. The Negeb, or extreme south.* Many of these places, few of which can be certainly located, are no more than wells, or pockets of earth where the rain-bearing wind from the Mediterranean might afford a slight rainfall where contour and exposure were favourable on the western steppe between Beersheba and Kadesh in the south, north and west of a line roughly between Kurnūb and 'Ain Qudeirāt (see map in A. D. Baly, op. cit., pp. 260-63, fig. 47). The semi-sedentary life of the district is indicated by the number of names compounded with Hazor ('enclosure', here 'sheepfold'); see on 13.3, 23. The best-known of the places are Kadesh ('Ain Qudeirāt, see on 13.3, 23); Beersheba (verse 28), which may have been the administrative centre of the district in the monarchy, as the note 'and her daughter-settlements' may indicate (reading *b'nôṭêhā* by a very slight emendation of Biziothiah); Hormah (verse 30); Ziklag (verse 31); and Shilhim (verse 32). Beersheba was the conventional southern limit of the settled land as Dan was the northern limit. Hormah was the city laid waste under the ban on the advance from the south (Num. 21.1-3; cf. Jg. 1.16-17) after an initial defeat (Num. 14.45). The name may rather mean a cult-place on the Arabic etymology (so A. von Gall,



Chesil, Hormah, <sup>31</sup> Ziklag, Madman'nah, Sansan'nah, <sup>32</sup> Leba'oth, Shilhim, A'in, and Rimmon: in all, twenty-nine cities, with their villages.

33 And in the lowland, Esh'ta-ol, Zorah, Ashnah, <sup>34</sup> Zano'ah, En-gan'nim, Tap'pu-ah, Enam, <sup>35</sup> Jarmuth, Adul'lam, Socoh, Aze'kah, <sup>36</sup> Sha-ara'im, Aditha'im, Gede'rah, Gederatha'im: fourteen cities with their villages.

'Altisraelitische Kultstätten', *BZAW* III, 1898, p. 37). Alt proposed the identification with Tell es-Seba' (*KS* III, 1959, pp. 431-35). Ziklag is best known as David's heritable fief when he was a feudal vassal of Achish of Gath (1 Sam. 27.6). It is feasibly located by Alt (*KS* III, 1959, pp. 429-30) at Tell el-Khuweilifeh, c. 11 miles NNE. of Beer-sheba. Shilhim is Sharuhin in the tribal territory of Simeon (19.6), which is probably to be located at Tell el-Fār'a, the great revetted fortress in the Wādī Ghazzeḥ, c. 20 miles S. of Gaza, excavated by Sir W. Flinders Petrie, where the Hyksos maintained themselves stubbornly after their expulsion from Egypt in 1580 B.C. This district is also reckoned to Simeon (19.2-6).

32. in all, twenty-nine cities with their villages: the enumeration is characteristic of the town-lists in the various administrative districts, not always agreeing with the towns listed, which, in defect of names, indicates deficiency in the source, and in the surplus of names, as in this district, indicates later recensional interpolation. The difference between 'cities' and 'villages' is noteworthy. The former are fortified settlements, the latter open, no more than concentrations of sheepfolds or, in the settled land, farm buildings. The 'cities' in this area are no more than watchtowers, possibly the original meaning of 'city' (Hebrew 'îr, as the evidence of a root *gyr* ('to keep') in the Rās Shamra texts suggests (see on 12.2).

33-36. *District II, in the Shephelah*. Particularly east and west of the north-south depression from Zorah (Ṣar'a) and nearby Eshtaol (cf. Jg. 13.25), just north of the Vale of Sorek (Wādī eṣ-Ṣarār) to Azekah (Tell ez-Zakariyeh), which dominates the Vale of Elah (Wādī es-Sanṭ) just west of the great depression, and the heights north (Jarmuth) and south of the Wādī es-Sanṭ (Socoh, Adullam).

The most significant of those places was **Zorah**, known as Samson's birthplace (Jg. 13.2)=Ṣar'a, 2 miles N. of Bethshemesh, **Jarmuth**, modern Yarmūk (see on 10.3ff.), **Adullam** (see on 12.13-16a), **Socoh**=Khirbet 'Abbād, an Iron Age site just before the Wādī es-Sanṭ forks towards Adullam and Hebron and north-east to Bethlehem, the name surviving in the adjacent Khirbet esh-Shuweikeh, and **Azekah**. Bethshemesh is a significant omission from this list, by which we may conclude that the list stems from a time when Bethshemesh was derelict, which G. E. Wright would date towards the end of the 10th century (*JBL* LXXXV, 1956, pp. 215f.). We are not convinced by his dating of stratum IIa to the time of David rather than to Solomon, but Rehoboam's fortification of the neighbouring Zorah

37 Zenan, Hadash'ah, Mig'dal-gad, <sup>38</sup> Di'lean, Mizpeh, Jok'-the-el, <sup>39</sup> Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, <sup>40</sup> Cabbon, Lahmam, Chitlish, <sup>41</sup> Gede'roth, Beth-da'gon, Na'amah, and Makke'dah: sixteen cities with their villages.

42 Libnah, Ether, Ashan, <sup>43</sup> Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, <sup>44</sup> Ke-i'lah, Achzib, and Mare'shah: nine cities with their villages.

45 Ekron, with its towns and its villages; <sup>46</sup> from Ekron to the sea, all that were by the side of Ashdod, with their villages.

(2 Chr. 11.10) suggests that Bethshemesh was neglected in his time and probably also in the latter part of Solomon's reign. Other sites in this list fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chr. 11.5-10) are Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah, in apprehension therefore of an attack from Egypt. The regional capital would probably be one of those places.

**Eshtaol** and **Zorah** are also assigned to Dan (19.41), which includes Ir-shemesh ('the City of the Sun', probably Bethshemesh). This either reflects traditional tribal associations of Dan in their earlier settlement or an ideal reconstruction based on administrative lists after Josiah's expansion to the district.

The cities are enumerated as fifteen, but only fourteen are listed, LXX omitting **Adithaim** (verse 36), perhaps consciously harmonizing.

**37-41a. District III, also in the Shephelah.** Particularly in the south-west, probably at one time in Solomon's administrative district with the capital at **Lachish** (Tell ed-Duweir, see on 10.3). This, with **Cabbon**, probably the neighbouring village of Qubeibeh, is the only certain location. In view of the probable location of **Makkedah** in the north of the Shephelah near Bethshemesh (see on 10.11), its inclusion here is suspect. On Eglon see on 10.3.

**42-44a. District IV, central Shephelah.** This was between the Wādī es-Sant and Wādī el-Afranġ, with the capital probably at Mareshah. The places most notable in the Old Testament are **Libnah** (verse 42, see on 10.29), **Keilah** (verse 44, plausibly located by Alt, *KS* II, 1959, p. 304, at Tell Qila on the southern tributary of the Wādī es-Sant, c. 9 miles NW. of Hebron), and **Mareshah**, best known as the home of the prophet Micah (Mic. 1.1). The site was in the vicinity of Beit Jibrīn, 5 miles NE. of Lachish, where a small Roman site Khirbet Mar'ash preserves the name. This is near Tell es-Sandahanna, just over 1 mile SSE. of Beit Jibrīn, which was certainly Marissa of the Hellenistic period, with traces of occupation back to c. 800 B.C. It is doubtful if this is the site of Mareshah fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chr. 11.8), which should rather be located at Tell el-Judeideh 2 miles N. of Beit Jibrīn. In Micah's punning reference to places in the vicinity **Achzib** (verse 44) is mentioned (Mic. 1.14).

**45-47. District V, the Philistine Plain.** There is no mention of Ashkelon or Gath,

47 Ashdod, its towns and its villages; Gaza, its towns and its villages; to the Brook of Egypt, and the Great Sea with its coast-line.

48 And in the hill country, Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, <sup>49</sup> Dannah, Kir'ia<sup>h</sup>-san'nah (that is, Debir), <sup>50</sup> Anab, Esh'temoh, Anim, <sup>51</sup> Goshen, Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities with their villa ges.

52 Arab, Dumah, Eshan, <sup>53</sup> Janim, Beth-tap'pu-ah, Aphe'kah, <sup>54</sup> Humtah, Kir'ia<sup>h</sup>-ar'ba (that is, Hebron), and Zi'or: nine cities with their villages.

55 Ma'on, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, <sup>56</sup> Jezre'el, Jok'de-am, Zano'ah, <sup>57</sup> Kain, Gib'e-ah, and Timnah: ten cities with their villages.

which in the latter case may support our view that Gath and Libnah (verse 42) were identical. The fact that so few, and only Philistine, cities are named may be due to the fact that other settlements were enumerated artificially in the territory of Dan (19.41-46). Those, however, are only north of Ekron, and we suggest that the passage reflects a division made soon after Josiah had taken advantage of the defeat of Assyria to claim the Philistine plain proper, which, however, his death in 609 B.C. had prevented him organizing. Here, significantly, the settlements are not enumerated.

48-51. *District VI, in the hill country.* In view of the mention of a whole district 'the land of Goshen', which is apparently adjacent to, but distinct from, the Shephelah and the Negeb (11.16), **Goshen**, as Noth suggests (op. cit., p. 97) was probably the capital of the district. The place-names survive to a remarkable degree in the district west of edh-Dhahariyeh, 12 miles SW. of Hebron at the southern limit of the hills of Judah, and one would expect Goshen to be located at one of the more conspicuous tells in the region, such as Tell 'Eiṭūn, c. 6 miles NW. of edh-Dhahariyeh, or Tell Beit Mirsim, 2½ miles SW. of that, which Noth (op. cit., p. 97) proposes. **Debir** was apparently included in this district (verse 49), here being called also '**Kiriath-sannah**', which may be a scribal corruption of Kiriath-sepher, with which Debir is usually identified, by homoeoteleuton after **Dannah**.

52-54. *District VII, also in the hill country.* This includes **Hebron**, the centre of the Kenizzites, an important sanctuary (2 Sam. 5.3), and one of the cities fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chr. 11.10), obviously the capital of the district which was especially associated with the Kenizzites. Noth (op. cit., p. 98) after Elliger explains the omission of Debir (Kiriath-sepher), which he would locate at Khirbet eṭ-Ṭarrāmeh, c. 5 miles SSW. of Hebron, by supposing that the lists reflect the ravages of Sennacherib in 701 B.C. If Debir were here, its omission need not unduly surprise us, as Adoraim (Dūrā, 5 miles SW. of Hebron) is also omitted, though its significance was indicated by its fortification by Rehoboam (2 Chr. 11.9).

55-57. *District VIII, in the hill country east of the watershed and south-east of Hebron.*

58 Halhul, Beth-zur, Gedor, <sup>59</sup> Ma'arath, Beth-anoth, and El'tekon: six cities with their villages.

60 Kir'iath-ba'al (that is, Kir'iath-je'arim), and Rabbah: two cities with their villages.

61 In the wilderness, Beth-arabah, Middin, Seca'cah, <sup>62</sup> Nibshan, the City of Salt, and En-ged'i: six cities with their villages.

The district capital is uncertain, though Rehoboam's fortification of **Ziph** and the name among the four jar-handle stamps of the period of the Jewish monarchy may indicate Ziph as the administrative centre. This was probably the district particularly associated with the Kenites, as Alt suggested (*KS* II, 1959, p. 286); cf. **Kain** in the list of settlements (verse 57). This is the region where David maintained himself as an outlaw from Saul, and four of the places listed are mentioned in the narrative of his escapades: **Maon**, the home of Nabal and Abigail (1 Sam. 23.24ff., 25.2), **Carmel** (1 Sam. 25.2ff.), **Ziph** (1 Sam. 23.14ff.), and **Jezreel**, the home of one of David's wives (1 Sam. 25.43).

58-59. *District IX, the hill country north of Hebron.* The capital was **Beth-zur** (Khirbet eṭ-Ṭubeiqeh; cf. O. R. Sellers, *The Citadel of Bethsur*, 1939), which commands the head of the important branch of the Wādī es-Sanṭ, which gives access from the coastal plain to Hebron, and was fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chr. 11.7). The largest surviving settlement is **Halhul**, a prosperous village amidst extensive orchards and vineyards, 3½ miles N. of Hebron.

59. *District X, the hill country round Bethlehem.* The district of Bethlehem is indicated in the addition in LXX: 'Thekō and Ephratha, that is Bethlehem, and Phagōr and Aitan and Koulon and Tatam and Eōbēs and Karem and Galem and Thethēr and Manochō, eleven cities and their villages.' Bethlehem was probably the district capital, the tribal settlement of Judah proper. The Hebrew text translated by LXX permits a restoration of the system of twelve administrative districts in the kingdom of Judah. Besides Bethlehem, the places best known in the Old Testament lie to the east of the watershed, such as Tekoa, the home of Amos (Am. 1.1), and of modern interest are Beth-Gallim (Beit Jāla, 1 mile NW. of Bethlehem) and Kerem ('Ain Kārim, 2 miles W. of Jerusalem), both large flourishing Christian villages.

60. *District XI, comprising apparently two isolated sites Kiriath-jearim and the unknown Rabbah.* The inclusion of **Kiriath-jearim** in the town-list of Benjamin (18.28) indicates that the list of places in the administrative district of Jerusalem was attached to Benjamin, which reflects the inclusion of Benjamin in the kingdom of Judah after the Disruption of the kingdom.

61-62. *District XII, 'the wilderness' of Judah.* This was the steppe south-east of Jerusalem to the Dead Sea and the lower Jordan Valley, in the rain-shadow and so rapidly deteriorating. The region is extended southwards to **Engedi**. Under Josiah the administrative centre would be Jericho, which is not named here, a fact which



63 But the Jeb'usites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the people of Judah could not drive out; so the Jeb'usites dwell with the people of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

**16** The allotment of the descendants of Joseph went from the Jordan by Jericho, east of the waters of Jericho, into the wilderness, going up from Jericho into the hill country to Bethel;

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suggests that the list comes from the time when the Northern Kingdom held Jericho. A date may be suggested by the fact that **Middin**, **Secacah**, **Nibshan**, and the **City of Salt**, which are to be identified with Khirbet Abū Ṭabaq, Khirbet es-Samrā, and Khirbet el-Maḡārī in the Buqei'a, beyond the escarpment west of Qumrān, 'the City of Salt' and the Iron Age settlement at Khirbet Qumrān, were not settled before the 9th century, and were abandoned c. 600 B.C. (J. T. Milik and F. M. Cross, 'Explorations in the Judaeon Buqē'ah', *BASOR* 142, 1956, pp. 5-17; F. M. Cross and G. E. Wright, 'The Boundary and Province Lists of the Kingdom of Judah', *JBL* LXXV, 1956, pp. 223-26). The settlement may be connected with the building of fortresses and store-cities by Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 17.12) in the second quarter of the 9th century. The relation of this section in the administrative lists to this date would account for the omission of Jericho, which had been abandoned until the time of Ahab, when it was rebuilt by one of his subjects, Hiel of Bethel (1 Kg. 16.34). The settlement of such places in an area such as the Buqei'a, where cultivation is possible perhaps once in several years, indicates at once the intensive development forced upon Judah after the Disruption of the kingdom, and that the settlement had a strategic significance, related perhaps to the restlessness of Moab under the yoke of Omri and her eventual revolt (2 Kg. 3). The settlement of En-gedi, which was a fertile oasis, where Tell el-Jurn has Iron Age débris, was possibly connected with the potential menace from Moab across the Dead Sea, which was fordable until just over a century ago from the Lisān peninsula to a point c. 10 miles S. of En-gedi (T. J. Salmon and G. T. McCaw, 'The Level and Cartography of the Dead Sea', *PEQ*, 1936, pp. 103-11).

63. Note on the symbiosis of Judah and the Jebusites of Jerusalem (cf. the exclusion of Jerusalem from Judah in 15.8 and from Benjamin in 18.16) which may be redactional, but is true to conditions of the settlement if, by Jerusalem, the lands as well as the fortified settlement on the south-east hill are meant.

#### THE INHERITANCE OF JOSEPH 16.1-17.18

Eventually subdivided into Ephraim (16.5-10) and Manasseh (17.1-13) (see General Introduction, p. 37).

After the description of the boundary-points of Joseph (16.1-3), the boundaries of Ephraim (verses 5-8) and those of Manasseh are described with a note on the settlement of certain clans within the tribe and on the settlement in Transjordan (17.1-13). The section on Manasseh is much more circumstantial, and may originally have preceded the section on Ephraim. It has received secondary expansions. First there is the note on the settlement of part of the tribe Machir beyond Jordan (17.1), which is probably motivated by the exception to the convention of the eldest son receiving the whole heritage, as Noth suggests (*op. cit.*, p. 102), occasioned in this case by the settlement of Machir in the northern part of North Transjordan. Then after a note on the settlement of certain clans of Manasseh (17.2) there is a digression on certain minor clans, 'the daughters of Zelophehad' (verses 3-4), after Num. 27.1-11, which is an aetiological tradition. Those lists differ from the description of Judah in that boundary-lists are used, but there is no systematic listing of towns. The note on the few towns in, and bordering upon, the great central plain, and Dor in the plain of Sharon (17.11), probably reflects the incorporation of these towns in the realm of David or Solomon. The names of the clans of Manasseh probably all eventually became names of settlements. This at any rate is beyond doubt in the case of Shechem (17.2) and Tirzah (17.3), and Abi-ezer, Helek, Shechem, Shemida, Hogleh, and Mahlah are noted as places on the fiscal ostraca from Samaria, dated by S. A. Birnbaum (*Samaria-Sebaste*, III, 1957, edited by J. W. and G. M. Crowfoot and K. M. Kenyon, pp. 9-25) c. 750-725 B.C. Beyond this there is no definite note of the towns of Manasseh. The section closes with a narrative of an episode in the expansion of Joseph (17. 14-18). Hertzberg (*op. cit.*, p. 104) sees an aetiological tradition explaining how Joseph alone of the sons of Jacob had a double lot, but, however it may have been adapted in the Book of Joshua, the tradition probably rests on the historical basis of the penetration of hitherto uninhabited land as the result of a tribal arbitration, where Alt feasibly detects the actual significance of the historical Joshua ('Josua', KS I, 1953, pp. 190-91). Here two variant accounts are indicated, in 17.14-15, where the congestion of the land occupied by the not yet divided tribe of Joseph prompts the demand for more land, and in verses 16-18, where the Canaanite fortresses in the great central plain limit the settlement. Probably those factors contributed to the expansion of Manasseh over Jordan, but that is not necessarily visualized here. We find no necessary reference to Transjordan in 'the land of the Perizzites and the Rephaim', which Noth claims (*op. cit.*, p. 107), both elements, as Hertzberg points out (*op. cit.*, p. 104), 'dwellers in open villages and aborigines' being mentioned as often west of Jordan as east (Gen. 13.7, 34.30; Jos. 11.3), the Perizzites being regularly mentioned in the conventional list of pre-Israelite inhabitants of Palestine (Dt. 7.1; Jos. 3.10, on which see, etc.).

### *The South Boundary of Joseph 1-3*

Naming the same points as the description of the north boundary of Benjamin from the Jordan to Beth-horon (18.12-14a). This may correspond to the actual line

<sup>2</sup> then going from Bethel to Luz, it passes along to At'aroth, the territory of the Archites; <sup>3</sup> then it goes down westward to the territory of the Japh'letites, as far as the territory of Lower Beth-hor'on, then to Gezer, and it ends at the sea.

4 The people of Joseph, Manas'seh and E'phraim, received their inheritance.

of the penetration of Joseph, which we have connected with the destruction of Bethel (just before or just after 1300 B.C.; see General Introduction, pp. 37ff.). The expansion northwards instead of southwards may be connected with the proximity of the city-state of Jerusalem, no other power being attested in the central highlands in the Amarna Tablets except Shechem. The antiquity of the boundary may be indicated by the mention of the **Archites** (verse 2) and the **Japhletites** (verse 3), probably tribes, the latter being such in 1 Chr. 7.32ff., and the former probably so in 2 Sam. 15.32.

**1. the allotment . . . went:** (lit. 'the lot went out'). Refers to the lot falling out of the receptacle in which it was shaken (see on 7.14), though 'lot' might mean portion, as understood by LXX ('the border . . . was from . . .').

**by Jericho:** which was excluded, being in Benjamin.

**east of the waters of Jericho:** omitted in LXX. If original it refers either to the outflow of the Wādī Dūq, called in its winter torrent bed in its lower course Wādī Nu'eimeh, or to the general water system of Jericho from the point where it was exhausted in irrigation to the east of the town.

**2. Bethel . . . Luz.** Cf. Jg. 1.23; Gen. 28.19, where Luz is given as the older name of Bethel. If, as the present passage suggests, the two are distinct, the first may be Burj Beitūn, between Ai and Beitūn, where early Christian tradition located the place of Abraham's altar, perhaps the sanctuary of historical Israel, and Luz the city on the site of Bethel (modern Beitūn), where J. L. Kelso found settlements from c. 2000 B.C. throughout the Bronze Age and the Israelite period. Certain MSS. of LXX, however, omit 'Luz'. The name **Ataroth** survives in Khirbet 'Aṭṭāra, c. 4½ miles SSW. of Beitūn. As this is a Roman-Byzantine site, Ataroth of verse 2 must be sought elsewhere in the vicinity, possibly at Tell en-Naṣbeh (Mizpah) on a ridge 2½ miles SSW. of Beitūn.

**3. Beth-horon:** the name survives in Beit 'Ūr et-taḥtā, c. 8 miles W. of Tell en-Naṣbeh. The south-west boundary-point was **Gezer** on a low hill commanding access from the coastal plain to the valley of Ajalon, c. 10 miles SW. of the Lower Beth-horon, which Israel occupied only under Solomon (1 Kg. 9.16).

**the sea** as the west extremity of the boundary of Joseph is unrealistic until the time of David or even Solomon, and may reflect the revision of an earlier tradition of the southern boundary-points of Joseph in the light of the administrative division of the kingdom of Judah, which included Benjamin.

5 The territory of the E'phraimites by their families was as follows: the boundary of their inheritance on the east was At'aroth-ad'dar as far as Upper Beth-hor'on, <sup>6</sup> and the boundary goes thence to the sea; on the north is Michme'thath; then on the east the boundary turns round toward Ta'anath-shi'loh, and passes along beyond it on the east to Jano'ah, <sup>7</sup> then it goes down from Jano'ah to At'aroth and to Na'arah, and touches Jericho, ending at the Jordan. <sup>8</sup> From Tap'pu-ah the boundary goes westward to the brook Kanah, and ends at the sea. Such is the inheritance of the tribe of the

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### *The Settlement of Ephraim 4-10*

Probably transposed by a later redactor under the influence of the tradition of the junior branch of the tribe of Joseph (cf. Gen. 48.20, J and E); cf. the hegemony of Ephraim under Samuel. It might naturally be assumed that, the south boundary of Joseph including Ephraim and Manasseh having already been described, there is no need to describe the south boundary of Ephraim, and in fact it is not described. Nevertheless the Upper Beth-horon is mentioned (16.5) with the addition that the boundary goes thence to the sea (verse 6). Since the Lower Beth-horon has already been given as a point in the south boundary of Joseph, from which the boundary ran west to the sea, this can only mean that the south border of Joseph really visualizes the boundary between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah after the Disruption of the monarchy, or the boundary between the kingdom of Judah and the Assyrian province of Samaria after the fall of the Northern Kingdom. The territory of Ephraim, on the other hand, reflects the much more limited occupation of the tribe before the monarchy, when the south-west boundary-point was on the edge of the plateau at the Upper Beth-horon, **'and the boundary goes thence to the sea'** being a redactional expansion. Another difficulty seems to be the statement that **'the boundary of their inheritance on the east was Ataroth-addar as far as Upper Beth-horon'** (16.5). We may understand thereby that the boundary-point on the south-west was the Upper Beth-horon, Ataroth-addar being added as an after-thought to indicate that there (Ataroth in the description of the south border of Ephraim, 16.2) the boundary of Ephraim westwards deviated from the southern boundary ascribed in verses 1-3 to Joseph. **Michmethath** is the pivotal boundary-point of Ephraim in the north, possibly Khirbet-Juleijil in the plain of Makhneh south-east of Shechem (east of Shechem, 17.7). From there four boundary-points are mentioned in a south-eastern and finally southern direction to the confines of Jericho just beyond **Naarah** (16.7), which Eusebius notes as a Jewish settlement five Roman miles from Jericho, which might suggest 'Ain Dūq, where the explosion of a shell in 1918 revealed the mosaic of a synagogue (E. L. Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece* (Schweich Lectures, 1930), 1934,



E'phraimites by their families, <sup>9</sup> together with the towns which were set apart for the E'phraimites within the inheritance of the Manas'sites, all those towns with their villages. <sup>10</sup> However they did not drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: so the Canaanites have dwelt in the midst of E'phraim to this day but have become slaves to do forced labour.

**17** Then allotment was made to the tribe of Manas'seh, for he was the first-born of Joseph. To Machir the first-born of Manas'-

pp. 28-31). Contentions between the Jews and monks in the valley north-west of Jericho in the Byzantine age suggest that 'Ain Dūq is 'the waters of Jericho' (16.1). West from Michmethath the boundary runs some six miles to **Tappuah** (Khirbet Sheikh Abū Zarad by Yasūf) and westwards to the **brook Kanah** (still called Wādī Qānā), which drains this vicinity to the 'Aujā River (Jarkon), 9 miles NE. of Jaffa.

9. This is a redactional note, which has regard to the original order under which the undivided territory of Joseph was visualized. On the other hand, the situation is literally exemplified in the case of Tappuah, which was in Ephraim, though the lands of the Canaanite settlement fell to Manasseh (17.8). A list of such places may once have been extant, as 17.9 suggests.

10. An adjustment by the Deuteronomic redactor with regard to Jg. 1.29. The note that the Canaanites became **slaves to do forced labour** (cf. 17.13) reflects Solomon's adaptation of the *corvée* system, now well attested as a Canaanite institution in the administrative texts from the palace of Rās Shamra (C. Vroilleaud, *Syria*, XXI, 1940, pp. 123-51, 247-76; *Le Palais Royal d'Ugarit*, II, edited by C. F. A. Schaeffer, 1957, pp. 17-35; J. Nougayrol, *Le Palais Royal d'Ugarit*, III, edited by Schaeffer, 1955, pp. 23-176). This suggests to the Deuteronomist a satisfactory explanation of the survival of the Canaanites in the divinely directed occupation of the Promised Land.

### *The Settlement of Manasseh 17.1-13*

Prefaced by a note on the settlement of Gilead by Machir, stated to be the eldest son (sc. clan) of Manasseh; cf. Num. 26.28ff., where he is apparently the *only* son (cf. Gen. 50.23). The association with Transjordan reflects the tradition of the settlement of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh before the settlement west of the Jordan. The settlement of North Transjordan, however, may have been effected from the west, where Machir seems to have settled in the time of the Judges (Jg. 5.14). It is uncertain whether the expansion over Jordan from the central highlands was in consequence of congestion (cf. verses 14-18) or through the natural attraction of the good land on the west escarpment of Transjordan with its

seh, the father of Gilead, were allotted Gilead and Bashan, because he was a man of war. <sup>2</sup>And allotments were made to the rest of the tribe of Manas'seh, by their families, Abie'zer, Helek, As'ri-el, Shechem, Hephher, and Shemi'da; these were the male descendants of Manas'seh the son of Joseph, by their families.

3 Now Zeloph'ehad the son of Hephher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manas'seh, had no sons, but only daughters; and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. <sup>4</sup> They came before Elea'zar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the leaders, and said, 'The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance along with our brethren.' So according to the commandment of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father. <sup>5</sup> Thus there fell to Manas'seh ten portions, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which is on the other side of the Jordan; <sup>6</sup> because the daughters of Manas'seh received an

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perennial wādīs, which contrast so favourably with the dry east slopes and dry wādīs of the west. It is certain, however, that the region was settled by Israelites in the period of the Judges (cf. Jg. 11 and 1 Sam. 11). The settlement of the warlike Machir in North Transjordan may have been connected with David's control of the Aramaeans or with Solomon's garrisoning of the frontier after the rise of Damascus (1 Kg. 11.23-25).

2. *The clans of Manasseh*, of which **Abiezer**, the clan of Gideon (Jg. 6.11), **Helek**, **Shechem**, and **Shemida** are named as settlements near Samaria in the Samaritan ostraca. The fact that certain of these, e.g. Shechem and Helek, are mentioned in the Egyptian Execration Texts (19th century) indicates that the clans in such cases took their names from the localities and not vice versa.

3-4. *The inheritance of the daughters of Zelophehad* (see introduction to chapters 16-17). The redactor, who introduced the episode from Num. 26.33, 27.1ff., adapts it to the secondary tradition of the apportionment by **Eleazar the priest** and **Joshua** and the **tribal representatives** (the leaders, see on 9.15). The role of the priest Eleazar and the representatives of the people is a Priestly redaction after Num. 26.52-56, 33.54, 34.16-29; cf. Jos. 18.6, 8-10, where Joshua is the sole arbiter in the apportionment.

5. **ten portions, besides . . . Gilead and Bashan**: i.e. without Hephher, whose land was divided among his 'daughters'. Here their inheritance is severally equal to that of each of the other clans. The debate seems to concern not so much land as status in a sacral confederacy of the clans of Manasseh, perhaps the reorganization of an originally smaller confederacy at Shechem.

inheritance along with his sons. The land of Gilead was allotted to the rest of the Manas'sites.

7 The territory of Manas'seh reached from Asher to Michme'thath, which is east of Shechem; then the boundary goes along southward to the inhabitants of En-tap'pu-ah. <sup>8</sup> The land of Tap'pu-ah belonged to Manas'seh, but the town of Tap'pu-ah on the boundary of Manas'seh belonged to the sons of E'phraim. <sup>9</sup> Then the boundary went down to the brook Kanah. The cities here, to the south of the brook, among the cities of Manas'seh, belonged to E'phraim. Then the boundary of Manas'seh goes on the north side of the brook and ends at the sea; <sup>10</sup> the land to the south being E'phraim's and that to the north being Manas'seh's, with the sea forming its boundary; on the north Asher is reached and on the east Is'sachar. <sup>11</sup> Also in Is'sachar and in Asher Manas'seh had Beth-she'an and its villages,

**7-10.** *Fragmentary description of the boundary of Manasseh.* The north-east limit is given vaguely as Asher and there are only three fixed boundary-points, **Michmethah, which is east of Shechem**, the pivotal boundary-point in the north boundary of Ephraim (see on 16.4-10), Yasib (so LXX for M.T. **the inhabitants**, Hebrew *yôšēhē*) of 'Ain Tappuah, Yasūf, 8 miles S. of Shechem by Tell Sheikh Abū Zarad, the probable site of Tappuah, and **the brook Kanah**, the western part of the northern boundary of Ephraim. There is no description of the eastern border of Manasseh beyond the vague statement that it was contiguous with Issachar (verse 10). The occupation by Manasseh of the lands of Tappuah and by Ephraim of the town, sufficiently odd to warrant a special note in the text (verse 8), is rightly emphasized by Alt ('Das System der Stammesgrenzen im Buche Josua', KS I, 1953, p. 200), as an indication of the early date of the boundary lists of the tribes, preserving as it does the memory of the old Canaanite unit of central fortified town and surrounding country and villages, which were occupied piecemeal by the independent penetration of the tribes.

The abrupt note in verse 9b **The cities here, to the south of the brook (Kanan) among the cities of Manasseh, belong to Ephraim** agrees with nothing in the context, and a list of settlements may have been lost. The composite nature of the passage is indicated by the reiteration that the north boundary of Manasseh reached to Asher (verse 10). The eastern part of the northern border of Manasseh, quite vague here, may be supplemented from the list of the southern settlements of Issachar in 19.18-22.

**11-13.** *Canaanite settlements surviving the occupation.* The reckoning of cities in **Issachar** and **Asher** to Manasseh may indicate that Manasseh, more recent arrivals,

and Ib'leam and its villages, and the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, and the inhabitants of En-dor and its villages, and the inhabitants of Ta'anach and its villages, and the inhabitants of Megid'do and its villages; the third is Naphath.<sup>12</sup> Yet the sons of Manas'seh could not take possession of those cities; but the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land.<sup>13</sup> But when the people of Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labour, and did not utterly drive them out.

14 And the tribe of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, 'Why have you given me but one lot and one portion as an inheritance, although I am a numerous people, since hitherto the LORD has blessed me?'

<sup>15</sup> And Joshua said to them, 'If you are a numerous people, go up to

made a stronger and more effective claim to lands on which the older tribes such as Asher and Issachar had merely had rights of grazing and sojourn (see on 19.17-23 on the settlement of Zebulun and Issachar possibly as part of the land-settlement policy of Egypt in the 14th century). Neither Bethshean nor Ibleam is mentioned in the settlement of Issachar (19.17-23), nor En-dor, Taanach, or Megiddo in the settlement of Asher (19.24-31). In the case of Asher this may indicate that the name may primarily describe a physical region (see on 19.24-31). Verse 12 is an awkward admission of the Hebrews' failure to make any impression on the fortified cities at the edge of the great central plain (cf. Jg. 1.27ff.). These were Canaanite city-states commanding the passes through the hills to the great central plain which carried the traffic from Egypt to Damascus and beyond; e.g. Beth-shean (Tell Hūṣn by Beisān) at the eastern end of the plain, Ibleam (Khirbet Bel'āmeh) in the foot-hills near the southern pass from the central plain to the coastal plain by the plain of Dothan 1½ miles S. of Jenīn. En-dor (modern 'Ain Dūr), c. 7 miles SE. of Nazareth, seems too far north of Manasseh, and is possibly a corruption suggested by Dor, Khirbet Burj eṭ-Ṭanṭūra (cf. Jg. 1.27), on the coast south of the Carmel head.

**12. persisted in dwelling:** lit. 'were pleased to dwell', i.e. dwelt as they pleased.

**13. forced labour:** see on 16.10.

**14-18.** *Two variant narrative traditions* (verses 14-15 and 16-18) of the expansion of Joseph, apparently before the subdivision of the tribe ('to Ephraim and Manasseh' in verse 17 being a redactional gloss). See introduction to chapters 16-17, especially on the question of the area occupied east and west of Jordan.

**15. forest:** the word may mean either the evergreen forests of the northern part of Transjordan ('the forest of Ephraim', 2 Sam. 18.6) or the scrub, or *maquis*, of Palestine.



the forest, and there clear ground for yourselves in the land of the Per'izzites and the Reph'aim, since the hill country of E'phraim is too narrow for you.' <sup>16</sup> The tribe of Joseph said, 'The hill country is not enough for us; yet all the Canaanites who dwell in the plain have chariots of iron, both those in Beth-she'an and its villages and those in the Valley of Jezre'el.' <sup>17</sup> Then Joshua said to the house of Joseph, to E'phraim and Manas'sh, 'You are a numerous people, and have great power; you shall not have one lot only, <sup>18</sup> but the hill country shall be yours, for though it is a forest, you shall clear it and possess it to its farthest borders; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron, and though they are strong.'

**18** Then the whole congregation of the people of Israel assembled at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there; the land lay subdued before them.

**clear:** correct, though the verb in the M.T. is *bārā'*, which is used for *creatio e nihilo* in Gen. 1.1, and in Isa. 41.20 of Jerusalem being 'transformed' into gladness. It may be a homonym meaning in the intensive 'to clear', which has an Arabic cognate.

**16. chariots of iron:** i.e. plated with iron, an indication of the gradual nature of the Hebrew penetration to the central plain from the time of the decisive penetration of the younger tribes c. 1225 B.C., when iron was still a Hittite monopoly used in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt in small luxury goods, e.g. in Tutankhamen's tomb at the end of the 14th century. It was not until the 12th century that iron came into common use in armaments.

**Jezreel** (modern Zer'in) is near the low watershed of the great central plain (better than RSV 'valley') and gives its name to either the whole plain both east and west or specifically the lower part eastwards.

**18. to its farthest borders:** (lit. 'its goings out'). Possible, but a paraphrase. The Hebrew word, *tôš'ôṭāyû*, is possibly cognate with Arabic *waṣā'*, 'to be contiguous'. The eventual annexation of the Canaanite cities on the edge of the great central plain is visualized after the Israelites have cleared settlements in the *maquis* in the hills between Shechem and that region.

#### *The Apportionment to the Other Tribes 18.1-19.48*

This is represented in the introduction (18.1-10) as being effected by Joshua by means of the sacred lots before 'the whole congregation' (Hebrew *'ēdāh*) at the central sanctuary Shiloh. In contrast to the occupation of the south by Judah (chapter 15; Jg. 1.2ff.) and the Kenizzites (15.14-19; Jg. 1.11-15) on their own

initiative, like Joseph in the central highlands (17.14-18), the formality of the transaction is surprising, and there is much that suggests artificial reconstruction at a later date together with Priestly influence. The conception of the transaction before 'the whole congregation' convened *ad hoc* before 'the tent of meeting' (verse 1) and the technical language suggests the influence of P, and the needless repetition of Moses' apportionment to Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh (verse 7) and the special case of the Levites (verse 7), the reiteration of the settlement of Judah and Joseph (verse 5), and indeed the whole unrealistic conception of a systematic survey and apportionment by lot in the case of tribes already settled in their regions, as in the case of Issachar and Zebulun at least (see on 17.11-13), is certainly redactional. The result is a definite theological schematization. The Promised Land is conquered by the sovereign power of God, who distributes it to the tribes by the sacred lot. Though Judah and Joseph had taken the initiative in occupying their lands, they too, with the Transjordan tribes, are sacramentally associated with this transaction, which is before 'the whole congregation of the people of Israel'. Shiloh, the central shrine in the latter days of the pre-monarchic period (1 Sam. 1-4), associated with the Ark (1 Sam. 4.3-4) and 'the tent of meeting' (1 Sam. 2.22), is assumed to be the sanctuary where the lots were cast, obviously being inserted in the compilation after the occupation of the territory of Joseph, where Shiloh was. In point of fact the central shrine at the time visualized was probably Shechem (8.30-35 and chapter 24; Dt. 11.29-32, 27.4, 11ff.), though the earliest literary version, as indicated in the directions in verse 5, visualized Gilgal, influenced probably by the pre-Deuteronomic compilation in chapters 2-11, where the amphictyonic sanctuary was Gilgal (cf. Jg. 1.2, 2.1). Nevertheless there is probably a nucleus of historical fact in 18.1-10. The role of Joshua is that of supreme arbitrator in tribal boundary disputes, as in the claim of Joseph in 17.14-18. He is thus at home in the amphictyonic assembly, as in 8.30-35 and in chapter 24, mediating the Covenant and arranging for the declaration and application of the law as well as arbitrating in disputes between individuals and tribes. The survey of the land before apportionment by three men from each tribe is also so novel a feature in the tradition as to suggest originality, especially as it modifies the Priestly conception of apportionment by the divine lot before Joshua, Eleazar the priest, and the representatives of the tribes (Num. 34.16-28). The factual origin of the tradition was probably boundary commissions—not indeed to survey the land to be apportioned by lot, but to settle disputed claims in the case of elements already settled. The importance of tribal boundaries is fully apparent from the case of communal responsibility for manslaughter in Dt. 21.1-9. The written account of the various districts, on which the passage repeatedly insists (verses 4, 6, 8, 9), may well refer to written and attested records of evidence in such arbitrations for future reference, which may well have been among the sources for the tribal boundary-lists in Joshua 13-19, as Alt suggested.

The secondary, redactional character of the Shiloh tradition is clearly indicated by the fact that after the natural conclusion of the tribal apportionment 'so they

2 There remained among the people of Israel seven tribes whose inheritance had not yet been apportioned.<sup>3</sup> So Joshua said to the people of Israel, 'How long will you be slack to go in and take possession of the land, which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you?'<sup>4</sup> Provide three men from each tribe, and I will send them out that they may set out and go up and down the land, writing a description of it with a view to their inheritances, and then come to

finished distributing ...' (19.49), after a redactional note on Joshua's portion (19.50), a further formal conclusion is added explicitly mentioning the apportionment by lot by Eleazar the priest, Joshua, and the tribal heads, in that order, 'at Shiloh before the Lord' (19.51).

The tribal territories are described with varying fullness. That of Benjamin (18.11-28) is composed of the same elements as that of Judah (chapter 15), a list of boundary-points (18.11-20) and town-lists (verses 21-28), both very full, as we should expect since Benjamin was incorporated in the kingdom of Judah, from which administrative lists were available to the compiler. The boundaries of Simeon (19.1-9), semi-nomadic in the southern steppe, are not described, since the southern border of Judah at its greatest extent included Simeon, and the deficiency is supplemented by the use of the town-list (verse 2ff.) of District I of Judah (15.21ff.). In the case of the tribes of the central plain and Galilee (19.10-39) local data regarding boundary-points and town-lists must have been very inadequate, partly because the central plain and the plain of Acco were not effectively occupied until the early monarchy, with David's incorporation of Canaanite districts into the realm, and partly because of the fluctuation of the northern frontier after the Disruption of the kingdom of Solomon. When we consider that for the description of Judah the compiler depended on administrative lists in a kingdom whose frontier never drastically fluctuated for over 300 years, except for an interlude of some 20 years under Assyria, and on such lists from as late as the end of Josiah's reign, by which time North Israel had been reorganized for over 100 years as Assyrian provinces, this deficiency is not surprising.

**1. congregation:** ('*ēḏāh*), i.e. those who keep tryst (*mō'ēḏ*). A religious assembly is denoted, though the word may be used generally of a gathering, e.g. a gathering of the wicked (Pss. 22.16, M.T. 17; 86.14; Job 15.34) or even a swarm of bees (Jg. 14.8). P employs by preference the term *kāhāl*, which is used here in the verbal root assembled.

**Shiloh:** the addition of a late, priestly redactor (see introduction to chapters 18-19), as is also probably 'the tent of meeting', which is probably suggested by the oracle-lot, which was traditionally associated with the oracle in the E tradition of the desert wandering (Exod. 33.7-11). Shiloh is not mentioned in use after

me. <sup>5</sup> They shall divide it into seven portions, Judah continuing in his territory on the south, and the house of Joseph in their territory on the north. <sup>6</sup> And you shall describe the land in seven divisions and bring the description here to me; and I will cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. <sup>7</sup> The Levites have no portion among you, for the priesthood of the LORD is their heritage; and Gad and Reuben and half the tribe of Manas'seh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan eastward, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them.'

8 So the men started on their way; and Joshua charged those who went to write the description of the land, saying, 'Go up and down and write a description of the land and come again to me; and I will cast lots for you here before the LORD in Shiloh.' <sup>9</sup> So the men went and passed up and down in the land and set down in a book a description of it by towns in seven divisions; then they came to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh, <sup>10</sup> and Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD; and there Joshua apportioned the land to the people of Israel, to each his portion.

1 Sam. 1-4, and was probably destroyed by the Philistines, as is suggested by the archaeological evidence of the destruction of Khirbet Seilūn, c. 12 miles SE. of Shechem c. 1100 B.C. (H. Kjaer, *JPOS* X, 1930, p. 105).

4. **writing a description of it:** possibly recording of decisions in boundary disputes (see Introduction to chapters 18-19, p. 159). Alt ('Das System der Stammesgrenzen im Buche Josua', *KS* I, 1953, p. 201 n.) cites works by Wilhelm and Tod for Greek analogies, and boundary records are duly attested and filed in Mesopotamia. The linear alphabet of twenty-two signs was already in use in Palestine in the 13th century, and would have facilitated such records, which would normally have been deposited at the central sanctuary.

7. Redactional note explaining why only seven portions are assigned, the settlement of Judah and Joseph having been mentioned already (verse 5).

**the priesthood of the LORD:** cf. Dt. 10.8, 18.1ff., where the office of the Levites as a priestly caste is defined in the service of Yahweh in sacrifice and worship according to the Deuteronomic conception before the degradation of the Levites to menial office in the cult. In Dt. 10.8 they are particularly associated with the Ark, as in redactional expansions in chapters 3 and 4.

9. **by towns:** probably redactional, suggested by the town-lists, which are used to supplement the deficiency of the boundary-lists.



11 The lot of the tribe of Benjamin according to its families came up, and the territory allotted to it fell between the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Joseph.<sup>13</sup> On the north side their boundary began at the Jordan; then the boundary goes up to the shoulder north of Jericho, then up through the hill country westward; and it ends at the wilderness of Beth-a'ven.<sup>13</sup> From there the boundary passes along southward in the direction of Luz, to the shoulder of Luz (the same is Bethel), then the boundary goes down to At'aroth-ad'dar, upon the mountain that lies south of Lower Beth-hor'on.<sup>14</sup> Then the boundary goes in another direction, turning on the western side southward from the mountain that lies to the south, opposite Beth-hor'on, and it ends at Kir'iath-ba'al (that is, Kir'iath-je'arim), a city belonging to the tribe of Judah. This forms the western side.<sup>15</sup> And the southern side begins at the outskirts of Kir'iath-je'arim;

*The Settlement of Benjamin 18.11-28*

11-20. *List of boundary-points*; cf. southern border of Joseph (see on 16.1-3) = northern border of Benjamin from the high ground (lit. *shoulder*) north of Jericho to the Lower Beth-horon (verses 11-14), where it turned south then east to the outskirts of Kiriath-jearim (Qiryat el-'Ainab, also called Abū Ghōsh; see on 9.16). From there the southern boundary of Benjamin coincides with the northern border of Judah (see on 15.5b-9, in the opposite direction).

12. *the shoulder north of Jericho*: the ridge north of the Wādi Dūq ('the waters of Jericho', 16.1) and its dry lower course, the Wādi Nu'eimeh. The description 'shoulder' befits the last spur of this ridge before the plain in the Jordan valley.

*the wilderness of Bethaven*: i.e. 'pasture-land' lying on the dry eastern slopes (cf. 8.20, 24). Bethaven ('House of Vanity') is probably an orthodox parody for Bethel, as the description of the northern border of Joseph at this point (16.2) suggests.

14-15. The details of the boundary between Kiriath-jearim and the Spring of the Waters of Nephtoah are unclear and ambiguous. RSV rightly takes the last clause of verse 14 (Hebrew *zō'ē p'at-yām*) as a summary statement: **This forms the western side**. The southern border begins at the (presumably northern) edge of the lands of Kiriath-jearim. Literally the M.T. (*w'yāsā' hag-g'būl yāmmāh w'yāsā' 'el mā'yan mē neptōah*) means 'and the border went out westwards and went out to the spring of the Waters of Nephtoah', which is absurd. RSV suggests reading 'Ephron' for 'westwards' after the description of the northern border of Judah at this point (15.9). This passage, however, reads not 'Ephron' but 'the cities of

and the boundary goes from there to Ephron, to the spring of the Waters of Nephto'ah; <sup>16</sup> then the boundary goes down to the border of the mountain that overlooks the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is at the north end of the valley of Reph'aim; and it then goes down the valley of Hinnom, south of the shoulder of the Jeb'usites, and downward to En-ro'gel; <sup>17</sup> then it bends in a northerly direction going on to En-she'mesh, and thence goes to Geli'loth, which is opposite the ascent of Adum'mim; then it goes down to the Stone of Bohan the son of Reuben; <sup>18</sup> and passing on to the north of the shoulder of Beth-arabah it goes down to the Arabah; <sup>19</sup> then the boundary passes on to the north of the shoulder of Beth-hoglah; and the boundary ends at the northern bay of the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan: this is the southern border. <sup>20</sup> The Jordan forms its boundary on the eastern side. This is the inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin, according to its families, boundary by boundary round about.

21 Now the cities of the tribe of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, Beth-hoglah, Emek-ke'ziz, <sup>22</sup> Beth-arabah, Zemara'im, Bethel, <sup>23</sup> Av-vim, Parah, Ophrah, <sup>24</sup> Che'phar-am'-

Mount Ephron'. We propose to keep closer to the M.T., and suggest, on the reading of LXX 'to Gasein' for 'westwards', that *môšā'* has dropped out, *Môšā'* being the well-known settlement Moza in the Wādī eṣ-Ṣarār, north-east of Qiryat el-'Ainab (18.26). We restore the text *w'yāsā' hag-g'ḥāl yāmmāh l'môšā' 'el mā'yan mē neptōah*, 'and the border went out west of Moza to the spring of the Waters of Nephtoah', or *w'yāsā' hag-g'ḥāl 'el môšā' w'yāsā' 'el mā'yan mē neptōah*, 'and the border went out to Moza and went out to the spring of the Waters of Nephtoah'. This suggests the reading at 15.9 *w'yāsā' 'el môšā' 'ir har-'eprôn*, 'and it went out to Moza, a city of Mount Ephron' instead of the vague *w'yāsā' 'el 'ārē har-'eprôn*, 'and it went out to the cities of Mount Ephron'.

21-28. *Town-list in Benjamin.* The settlements fall into two groups, verses 21-24 and verses 25-28, each ending with an enumeration as the various district lists of Judah. The latter is District XI of the administrative division of the kingdom of Judah, which is defective in 15.60, listing only Kiriath-jearim and the unknown Rabbah, for the simple reason that the centres were fully noted in the description of the portion of Benjamin, in whose tribal district indeed those regions fell, at least north of the Wādī eṣ-Ṣarār. The former town-list has a peculiar interest in including Bethel (verse 22) and Ophrah (verse 23), which have both been already included

moni, Ophni, Geba—twelve cities with their villages; <sup>25</sup> Gibeon, Ramah, Beer'oth, <sup>26</sup> Mizpeh, Chephi'rah, Mozah, <sup>27</sup> Rekem, Irpeel, Tar'alalah, <sup>28</sup> Zela, Ha-eleph, Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), Gib'e-ah and Kir'iath-je'arim—fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin according to its families.

## 19 The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of Simeon, according to its families; and its inheritance was in the midst

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in Ephraim (16.1-3), as indeed the description of the northern boundary of Benjamin implies. As Alt noticed long ago (*KS* II, 1953, pp. 281ff.), this is irrelevant to the situation before Josiah's expansion to the north on the decline of Assyria in the last decade of his life (622-609 B.C.), and after the resettlement of the land under the Persian regime after the Exile. Another such place is **Ophni** (verse 24) if this is identical with Jifneh just north-west of Bethel, the modification of the initial consonant being due to the rendering of the initial guttural in Hebrew by *g* in Greek. With this exception, these localities, as distinct from those in verses 25-28, were east of the watershed of the central highlands, hence in the region to which District XII (the wilderness) of the kingdom of Judah belonged. Certain sites in this list have already been discussed in chapter 15. Ophrah is generally identified with et-Tayibeh, 4 miles NE. of Bethel, but the groupings are hard to understand, e.g. **Parah**, identified by Dalman (*PJB* X, 1914, p. 22ff.) with Tell Fāra by 'Ain Fāra 6 miles NE. of ancient Jerusalem, which we expect rather to be grouped with Geba (Jeba'), c. 3 miles N. of 'Ain Fāra. The fact that Geba falls into a different district from **Ramah** (er-Rām, c. 1½ miles westwards) indicates how strictly the division is determined by the watershed, with one exception, Ophni, if that is identical with Jifneh. This surely relates to fiscal divisions, places with similar rainfall and agricultural potential being carefully grouped together to facilitate fair assessment. In 18.28 the RSV reading 'Kiriath-jearim' depends on LXX; cf. M.T. 'Kiriath'.

### *The Lot of Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan 19.1-49*

With conclusion (verse 49), additional notes on the inheritance of Joshua (verses 49b-50), and the conclusion by the Priestly redactor of the whole episode (verse 51).

This matter varies considerably in content and treatment and in the fulness of source material available. The description of the territory of Simeon (verses 1-9), like Levi of no political significance in Israel of historical times, omits boundary-

of the inheritance of the tribe of Judah. <sup>3</sup> And it had for its inheritance Beer-sheba, Sheba, Mola'dah, <sup>3</sup> Hazar-shu'al Balah, Ezem, <sup>4</sup> Elto'lad, Bethul, Hormah, <sup>5</sup> Ziklag, Beth-mar'caboth, Ha'zar-su'sah, <sup>6</sup> Beth-leba'oth, and Sharu'hen—thirteen cities with their villages; <sup>7</sup> En-rimmon, Ether, and Ashan—four cities with their villages; <sup>8</sup> together with all the villages round about these cities as far as Ba'alath-beer, Ramah of the Negeb. This was the inheritance of the tribe of Simeon according to its families. <sup>9</sup> The inheritance of the tribe of Simeon formed part of the territory of Judah; because the portion of the tribe of Judah was too large for them, the tribe of Simeon obtained an inheritance in the midst of their inheritance.

10 The third lot came up for the tribe of Zebulun, according to its families. And the territory of its inheritance reached as far as Sarid; <sup>11</sup> then its boundary goes up westward, and on to Mar'eal, and touches Dab'besheth, then the brook which is east of Jok'ne-am; <sup>12</sup> from Sarid it goes in the other direction eastward toward the sunrise to the boundary of Chis'loth-ta'bor; thence it goes to

points, and lists settlements only, based on the second part of the town-list of the first administrative district of Judah (15.21-32).

2. **Sheba:** probably a dittograph of the second element in the preceding name Beersheba, as the enumeration of settlements in verse 6 suggests. For the text the list should be checked against 1 Chr. 4.28-32, which depends on the present passage. **Simeon:** Gen. 34.25-31 depicts Simeon and Levi in a much more active role in Shechem, which, however, resulted in their dispersal (Gen. 49.5-7) and decline in political significance, Levi to be a priestly caste and Simeon to live a semi-nomadic life in the steppes about Beersheba and southward. Politically and economically overshadowed by Judah (verse 9; Jg. 1.1-3), Simeon retained recognition among the tribes, probably as custodians of the shrine of Beersheba, which we believe to be 'the high places of Isaac' (Am. 7.9), which was a place of pilgrimage until at least the 8th century (Am. 5.5).

10-16. *The Lot of Zebulun*, contiguous in the south-west and north with Asher, in the north and east with Naphtali, and on the south-east with Issachar.

Here, as in the other tribal areas in Galilee, there is a marked difference of treatment. Instead of the enumeration of boundary-points followed by a list of towns, the list of the settlements generally coincides with the boundary-points. Here the well-defined boundary-points of Zebulun are listed from Sarid, probably to be read Sadid, Tell Shadūd in the foot-hills 5 miles SE. of Nazareth, **westwards . . . to the brook that is east of Jokneam** (Tell Qeimūn), that is probably



Dab'erath, then up to Japhi'a; <sup>13</sup> from there it passes along on the east toward the sunrise to Gath-hepher, to Eth-kazin, and going on to Rimmon it bends toward Ne'ah; <sup>14</sup> then on the north the boundary turns about to Han'nathon, and it ends at the valley of Iph'tahel; <sup>15</sup> and Kattath, Na'halal, Shimron, I'dalah, and Bethlehem—twelve cities with their villages. <sup>16</sup> This is the inheritance of the tribe of Zeb'ulun, according to its families—these cities with their villages.

17 The fourth lot came out for Is'sachar, for the tribe of Is'sachar, according to its families. <sup>18</sup> Its territory included Jezre'el, Chesul'-loth, Shunem, <sup>19</sup> Haph'ara-im, Shion, Ana'harath, <sup>20</sup> Rabbith,

the wādi which breaks through the foothills of Galilee by **Bethlehem** (verse 15), 7 miles W. of Nazareth. From 'Sarid', or Sadid, the border runs eastwards along the foothills to **Chisloth-tabor** (verse 12), probably near Iksāl, 2 miles SE. of Nazareth and 3 miles W. of Dabbūriyeh (**Daberath**, verse 12). If **Japhia** is Yāfā, this boundary-point may be displaced from after 'Sarid', since it lies west of the places previously mentioned in verse 12. It is in fact the first point in the boundary going north and up the foothills (note that it went *up*) in a north-easterly direction (**on the east toward the sunrise**) to **Gath-hepher**, 3 miles NE. of Nazareth, and generally identified with Gath-hepher, the home of Jonah the son of Amittai (2 Kg. 14.25). It is uncertain whether Nazareth was included in Zebulun or Naphtali, since the place is unmentioned in either, but the specific mention of the easterly trend of the border between Japhia and Gath-hepher suggests that it ran along the ridge rather than west of the upland depression of Nazareth with its spring. The next point is **Rimmon** (verse 13), Rummāneh, 6 miles N. of Nazareth, and so on to **Hannathon** (verse 14), Ḥinnatuni of the Amarna Tablets, modern Khirbet el-Beidāwiyeh, the conspicuous *tell* which once controlled access to the trunk highway through the upland plain of the Baṭṭūf from the great central plain by the open valleys by Bethlehem ('the brook that is east of Jokneam') and the Wādi el-Malik farther north, **the valley of Iphtahel**. The western boundary is not defined, but it was no doubt formed by the pass from Hannathon to the wādi by Bethlehem. The five settlements listed in verse 15 may be the remnant of an administrative list from the north kingdom of Israel, or from the Assyrian administration in the late 8th and 7th centuries, or possibly even a redactional expansion from the list of unconquered places in Jg. 1.30, as is suggested by the fact that more places are listed than the twelve given in the final enumeration.

17-23. *The Lot of Issachar*, north of Manasseh, east of Asher, south of Naphtali, south-east of Zebulun. Owing to the vagueness of the northern boundary of Manasseh (17.10-11) and the borders of the neighbouring Galilean tribes the boundaries of Issachar are also vague. The position of Jezreel (Zer'in) (verse 18)

Kish'ion, Ebez, <sup>21</sup> Remeth, En-gan'nim, En-had'dah, Beth-paz'zez; <sup>22</sup> the boundary also touches Tabor, Shahazu'mah, and Beth-she'mesh, and its boundary ends at the Jordan—sixteen cities with their villages. <sup>23</sup> This is the inheritance of the tribe of Is'sachar, according to its families—the cities with their villages.

24 The fifth lot came out for the tribe of Asher according to its families. <sup>25</sup> Its territory included Helkath, Hali, Beten, Ach'shaph, <sup>26</sup> Allam'melech, Amad, and Mishal; on the west it touches Carmel and Shihor-lib'nath, <sup>27</sup> then it turns eastward, it goes to Beth-dagon,

and En-gannim (Jenin) (verse 21) indicates that the list of places in verses 18-22 does not describe a boundary. Only verse 22 from Tabor to Jordan describes a boundary, and here the significance of Shahazumah and Beth-shemesh is not clear owing to the uncertainty of the locations. Apart from its possible support of Barak against Sisera (Jg. 5.15, on which see) the tribe was quite undistinguished, possibly being settled on lands depopulated by Egypt in her suzerainty of Palestine after the suppression of native revolt in this region (Alt, 'Neues über Palästina aus dem Archiv Amenophis IV', KS III, 1959, pp. 169-75); cf. Gen. 49.14-15, which may refer to this vassal status, and Judges 1, where Issachar is not mentioned. The source of this town-list in Issachar is uncertain.

24-31. *The Lot of Asher*, contiguous with Manasseh on the south (17.10-11) and with Zebulun and Naphtali in the east. Here there is a bewildering combination of incomplete boundary-points and groups of settlements. Many places cannot be precisely located, even where they are mentioned in the Karnak inscriptions of Thothmes III, such as Helkath (verse 25), with which the list begins, so that it is impossible to tell if this is a boundary-point on the southern edge of the great central plain (so Noth, *Das Buch Josua*, pp. 118-19) or simply a settlement within Asher, possibly at Tell el-Harbaj at the south-east extremity of the plain of Acco (so Alt, *PJB* XXV, 1929, pp. 38ff.). The deficiency of the source material is indicated here by the fact that the compiler does not, as in the southern areas, repeat contiguous boundary-points in contiguous tribal territories; thus it is impossible to tell how far Asher extended into the hills of Galilee. Another complication is, we suspect, that the term *Asher* is ambiguous, an ethnic term referring to the tribe, but perhaps primarily a geographical term describing a physical region, from which the Hebrew tribe took its name; cf. *Asaru* as a place-name in the Egyptian Papyrus Anastasi I (late 13th century). This is suggested to us by the fact that in verse 29 the northern boundary apparently terminates at Achzib (ez-Zib, 9 miles N. of Acco), whereas the area is stated to include Tyre and Sidon (verse 29), being bounded in the south by Shihor-libnath (verse 26), which drains from Carmel, and may be the Nahr ez-Zerqā, which flows into the Mediterranean 2½ miles N. of

and touches Zeb'ulun and the valley of Iph'tahel northward to Beth-emek and Nei'el; then it continues in the north to Cabul; <sup>28</sup> Ebron, Rehob, Hammon, Kanah, as far as Sidon the Great; <sup>29</sup> then the boundary turns to Ramah, reaching to the fortified city of Tyre; then the boundary turns to Hosah, and it ends at the sea; Mahalab, Achzib, <sup>30</sup> Ummah, Aphek and Rehob—twenty-two cities with their villages. <sup>31</sup> This is the inheritance of the tribe of Asher according to its families—these cities with their villages.

<sup>32</sup> The sixth lot came out for the tribe of Naph'tali, for the tribe of Naph'tali, according to its families. <sup>33</sup> And its boundary ran from

Caesarea. Now as **Dor** (Khirbet Burj eṭ-Ṭanṭūra), some 5 miles N. of this, was reckoned to Manasseh (17.10), **Asher** as a geographical term may refer to the narrow coastal strip running parallel to the mountains and the sea, hemmed in on the west by the Carmel range, the mountains of lower and upper Galilee and the Lebanon, perhaps signifying philologically 'a restricted area', as an Arabic cognate meaning 'tube' indicates.

What is apparently a description of the tribal territory of Asher is partly this, embracing the Carmel range and moving northwards through the plain of Acco with its numerous *tells*, conspicuous, though not certainly identified, and the western foothills of lower and upper Galilee to Achzib. In this region it is noteworthy that in the list of conquered kings in chapter 12 only Achshaph is mentioned (probably Tell Keisān; see on 11.1), which seems to indicate the limitation we have suggested for the settlement of the tribe of Asher. The extension to Sidon with the addition of place-names in this direction in verses 28-29a may be the work of a late redactor, who has in mind the geographical rather than the ethnic significance of 'Asher'.

<sup>29</sup>. In the region of **Achzib**: Mahalab should almost certainly be read for M.T. Mehebel, with LXX; cf. Jg. 1.31, where Ahlab and Helbah are mentioned. This might be Maḥālib just south of the mouth of the Liṭānī (Maḥalibu of Assyrian records). On the other hand Mehebel of M.T. might mean 'mooring-place' (of Achzib). **Ummah** (Acco after LXX; cf. Jg. 1.31), **Aphek**, and **Rehob** are part of a town-list, which from the enumeration in verse 31 is incomplete. The association with Acco (Tell el-Fukhkḥār, just east of the modern town) suggests that Aphek and Rehob are to be identified with conspicuous tells in the plain of Acco, the former with Tell Kurdāneh at the source (hence 'a *pēk*, 'the source') of the River Na'mīn, and Rehob possibly with Tell el-Bīr el-Gharbī by el-Birweh, 7 miles E. of Acco.

<sup>32-39</sup>. *The Lot of Naphtali*: contiguous on the south-east with Issachar, on the south-west with Zebulun (verse 34) and on the west with Asher (verse 34), reaching

Heleph, from the oak in Za-anan'nim, and Ad'ami-nekeb, and Jabneel, as far as Lakkum; and it ended at the Jordan; <sup>34</sup> then the boundary turns westward to Az'noth-ta'bor, and goes from there to Hukkok, touching Zeb'ulun at the south, and Asher on the west, and Judah on the east at the Jordan. <sup>35</sup> The fortified cities are Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chin'nereth, <sup>36</sup> Ad'amah, Ramah, Hazor, <sup>37</sup> Kedesh, Ed're-i, En-ha'zor, <sup>38</sup> Yiron, Mig'dal-el, Horem, Beth-anath, and Beth-she'mesh—nineteen cities with their villages. <sup>39</sup> This is the inheritance of the tribe of Naph'tali according to its families—the cities with their villages.

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the Jordan (verse 33) where it flowed out of the Sea of Galilee, and contiguous with Dan on the north-east.

The compiler here conforms most closely to his pattern in his description of the southern territories, with the boundary-points first, followed by a list of settlements. The significance of the first five places in verse 33 is uncertain, but **the oak of Zaanannim** suggests not a settlement but a landmark, and so a boundary-point. The mention of the Jordan suggests that the south-east boundary was being defined and here **Adami-nekeb** ('A. in the Pass'), probably Adama mentioned in Egyptian inscriptions from the 15th century to the 13th century, is identical with Khirbet ed-Dāmiyeh, south-west of the southern end of the Sea of Galilee. **Yabneel** is probably an Iron Age site in the vicinity, the name being revived in a recent Jewish settlement. The unknown **Lakkum** would then be between this point and the Jordan on the high ground south of the Wādī Fajjās, coinciding with the north-east boundary of Issachar (verse 22), which is not named here. **Heleph** (verse 33) then will be between Adami-nekeb and the foot of Tabor (**Aznoth-tabor**, verse 34), south-west of which **Hukkok** must lie. Thereafter it is vaguely stated that the border was with Asher in the west. In the repetition of the border towards Jordan and Judah seems absurd, and is omitted in LXX. It may be the corruption of a gloss to the effect 'Naph'tali touched Jordan where it flows out of the Sea of Galilee for a few miles just as Judah touches the lower Jordan before it flows into the Dead Sea'.

The town-list (verses 35-39) describes the settlement from south to north. A few towns north of the Sea of Galilee **Adama** (possibly Hajar ed-Damm, 2½ miles NW. of the debouchement of the Jordan into the Sea of Galilee), **Hazor** (see on 11.1) and possibly **Kedesh**, **Edrei**, and **En-hazor** mark the boundary with Dan to the north-east. The northern limit would seem to be **Yiron**, **Migdal-el**, **Horem**, **Beth-anath**, and **Beth-shemesh**, the first located at Yārūn at the present frontier between Israel and Lebanon, Beth-anath possibly 'Ainitha, c. 6 miles N. of Qadeis (Kedesh), as the context suggests, and Beth-shemesh possibly Hāris



40 The seventh lot came out for the tribe of Dan, according to its families. <sup>41</sup>And the territory of its inheritance included Zorah, Esh'ta-ol, Ir-she'mesh, <sup>42</sup>Sha-alab'bin, Ai'jalon, Ithlah, <sup>43</sup>Elon, Timnah, Ekron, <sup>44</sup>El'tekah, Gib'bethon, Ba'alath, <sup>45</sup>Jehud, Benebe'arak, Gathrim'mon, <sup>46</sup>and Me-jar'kon and Rakkon with the territory over against Joppa. <sup>47</sup>When the territory of the Danites was lost to them, the Danites went up and fought against Leshem, and after capturing it and putting it to the sword they took possession of it and settled in it, calling Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their ancestor. <sup>48</sup>This is the inheritance of the tribe of Dan, according to their families—these cities with their villages.

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(cf. Hebrew *heres*, 'the sun'), south-west of Tibnîn in the same locality. The last two places, by their names, were shrines of the Canaanite goddesses Anat and the Sun, both of whom play a conspicuous part in the Râs Shamra myths of the fertility-cult.

40-48. *The Lot of Dan.* The tribe of Dan never properly settled in the Shephelah (Jg. 18.1), from which they had to migrate to upper Jordan. The compiler cannot even pretend to describe a boundary, but prompted by a note on the difficulties of the settlement of Dan in the Northern Shephelah in Jg. 1.34-35, he utilizes the town-list for the second administrative district of the kingdom of Judah (15.33-36), supplemented by the Amorite settlements of Aijalon and Shaalabbin (Jg. 1.35). The extension northwards to Aijalon (Yālū, see on 10.12) indicates the administrative division of Solomon, the district being retained by Judah after the Disruption of the kingdom, when Rehoboam fortified Aijalon (2 Chr. 11.10). This is suggested by the fact that the district farther south to Gezer was comprehended in the territory of Joseph (16.3). The inclusion of Ekron (verse 43) and localities such as Eltekeh (verse 44), Beneberak (verse 45), and Me-jarkon towards Joppa (Jaffa) (verse 46) indicates the provisional organization of the Philistine area by Josiah on the decline of Assyria, who had administered this region from Ashdod. The localities in verses 43-44 are probably a fuller draft of the note of the fifth administrative district of Judah in 15.45-46, which mentions only the centres Ekron and Ashdod. The omission of important centres in this area, however, notably Lydda and Gezer, indicate that the source material was incomplete. It is not said that Jaffa was included. The section is concluded by a note on the migration of Dan to the upper Jordan after Judges 18. The text is uncertain. For **When the territory of the Danites was lost to them** LXX reads 'For the territory of the Danites was too narrow for them'. The reason for the migration seems more realistically given in Jg. 18.1, that they had not been able to effect a settlement in the Northern Shephelah, being confined to the hills by the Amorites (Jg. 1.34). The settlement

49 When they had finished distributing the several territories of the land as inheritances, the people of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun.<sup>50</sup> By command of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked, Tim'nath-se'rah in the hill country of E'phraim; and he rebuilt the city, and settled in it.

51 These are the inheritances which Elea'zar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel distributed by lot at Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tent of meeting. So they finished dividing the land.

20 Then the LORD said to Joshua,<sup>2</sup> 'Say to the people of Israel, "Appoint the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you

of Dan both east and west of the upper Jordan, of which the compiler was fully aware, may account for the fact that in his description of the settlement of Naphtali the boundary is not explicitly taken to the upper Jordan.

49-51. *Conclusion* (verse 49a), with *redactional notes of the inheritance of Joshua* (verses 49b-50), elaborated from the note on his grave in 24.30 and Jg. 2.9, and on the end of the transaction under Eleazar and Joshua at Shiloh (verse 51). On literary analysis, see Introduction to chapters 18-19, pp. 159f.

50. *Timnath-serah*: so also in 24.30 (cf. T-heres in LXX<sup>B</sup> and Old Latin versions, meaning 'the Portion of the Sun'; so in Jg. 2.9). The pagan implications occasioned the modification of the name. On the location at Khirbet Tibneh, 10 miles NW. of Bethel, and the significance of Joshua's burial-place here for the tradition of the Gibeonite campaign in chapter 9 see General Introduction, p. 41.

#### CITIES OF REFUGE 20.1-9

On the question of the date and relation to similar prescriptions in Dt. 4.41-43, 19.1-13 and Num. 35.9-34, see General Introduction, pp. 25ff.

The prescription is the development of a well-established institution in Semitic life and exemplified in modern times among the Arab tribes of the desert, where every tent is a potential asylum apart from any sacred associations. Shrines were also sanctuaries from rough justice, which was not always nice in its discrimination between murder and accidental homicide, in the Book of the Covenant (Exod. 21.13-14) and in the time of Solomon (1 Kg. 1.50-53), and of the six cities in Jos. 20.7-8, the three west of Jordan were certainly sanctuaries, though in the role of the cities and their elders the institution is already being secularized. This is probably the specific contribution of the Deuteronomist, reflecting the suppression

through Moses, <sup>3</sup> that the manslayer who kills any person without intent or unwittingly may flee there; they shall be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood. <sup>4</sup> He shall flee to one of these cities and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city, and explain his case to the elders of that city; then they shall take him into the city, and give him a place, and he shall remain with them. <sup>5</sup> And if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not give up the slayer into his hand; because he killed his neighbour unwittingly, having had no enmity against him in times past. <sup>6</sup> And he shall remain in that city until he has

of local sanctuaries in the time of Josiah. The regularization of the tribal rights of sanctuary, however, was probably necessitated earlier in the settlement of the various elements of Israel in a limited area. The complications of tribal sanctuary are well illustrated by the famous war of el-Basūs in Arab tradition, when the accidental wounding of a refugee's camel and the punctilio of vengeance by those who sheltered the man led to a forty years' war!

**2. cities of refuge:** (Hebrew *'ārē ham-miqlāt*). The definite article suggests that the subject had already been introduced, e.g. in verses 7-9a, where the language is less technical. This is the original passage, of Deuteronomic origin but referring to an ancient institution. Verses 1-9 are strongly impregnated with the phraseology of P, e.g. in the technical term 'city of refuge', which is not used in Dt. 4.41-43, 19.1-13 (which refer explicitly to the institution), but in Num. 35.9-34 (P).

**3. manslayer:** (*rōšēah*), from the same root as the verb in Exod. 20.13, denoting murder or killing in the blood-feud, but always with the connotation of wanton killing, where the subject takes the law into his own hands.

**without intent:** lit. 'in error', so Num. 35.11, 15 (P).

**unwittingly:** so D (Dt. 19.4; cf. 4.42).

**the avenger of blood:** 'blood' here defines one of the duties of the kinsman (*gō'ēl*), preferably the nearest kinsman, whose general duty it was to sustain the right of his kinsman, here to avenge his death (cf. 2 Sam. 14.11). The present institution, allowing blood-revenge only for premeditated murder, modifies the custom, though not abolishing it. Modification within the sanction of blood-revenge was also provided by Muhammad in Islam, and was probably also visualized in the Decalogue (Exod. 20.13).

**4. at the entrance of the gate:** not at the sanctuary or altar, a deliberate secularization of older custom; see Introduction to chapter 20, p. 171. The role of the elders may also indicate the custom as visualized by the Deuteronomist, apart from the secondary elaboration of verse 6; see introduction to chapter 20.

**6. until he has stood before the congregation:** this belongs to verse 3 (so Num. 35.12 and LXX, which omits verses 4-5 and reads verse 6a, influenced by

stood before the congregation for judgment, until the death of him who is high priest at the time: then the slayer may go again to his own town and his own home, to the town from which he fled.”

7 So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naph'tali, and Shechem in the hill country of E'phraim, and Kir'iath-ar'ba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. <sup>8</sup>And beyond the Jordan east of Jericho, they appointed Bezer in the wilderness on the tableland, from the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manas'seh. <sup>9</sup> These were the cities designated for all the people of Israel, and for the stranger sojourning among them, that any one who killed a person without intent could flee there, so that

Num. 35.12, immediately after verse 3). This indicates that verses 2 and 3 are elaborations on Dt. 19.1-13.

**until the death of the high priest:** redactional after Num. 35.9-34 (P). This reflects the unique status of the high priest on whom many of the functions of the king devolved after the Exile, a situation well illustrated by the respective positions of Zerubbabel and the high priest Joshua in Zechariah 4 and 6.

**7. set apart:** the verb denotes consecration, and certainly **Kedesh in Galilee, Shechem, and Hebron** were sanctuaries, as were probably the three places east of Jordan. In the Deuteronomic context, where a secularization of the institution is intended, the primary meaning of sanctification has given way to the secondary meaning of 'set apart'. All those cities are listed as Levitical settlements in chapter 21. The regional rather than tribal distribution of the cities of refuge is noteworthy. In so far as the arrangement reflects, as it probably does ultimately, conditions of the settlement, this regional arrangement was necessary to obviate inter-tribal complications in exercise of the right of sanctuary (see Introduction to chapter 20, p. 171). In this context, though **Naphtali, Ephraim, and Judah** are familiar as the names of tribes, their significance here and probably originally was to physical features, Naphtali possibly meaning 'the land of tortuous wādis and ridges'. The geographical connotation of Ephraim is indicated by the location here of Shechem, which was actually in the tribal territory of Manasseh.

**8.** The Transjordan cities are also located primarily in geographical regions, **the wilderness**, or 'steppe', at the edge of **the tableland, Gilead**, 'the hard', rocky 'land' (see on 12.2) in the mountains east of Jordan, and **Bashan** in the north, 'the soft, fertile land' (see on 12.4), where the district el-Jaulān preserves the name of Golan. Here the tribal locations are added secondarily through the misunderstanding of Naphtali, Ephraim, and Judah in verse 7.



he might not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, till he stood before the congregation.

**21** Then the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites came to Elea'zar the priest and to Joshua the son of Nun and to the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel;<sup>2</sup> and they said to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, 'The LORD com-

#### THE LEVITICAL CITIES 21.1-45

On the question of source and dating in the early monarchy, possibly under David, see General Introduction, pp. 26ff.; and for text, cf. 1 Chr. 6.54-81 (M.T. 39-66).

This is apparently a detailed specification of the arrangements for Levitical settlements in Num. 35.1-8 (P), as in the case of the cities of refuge in chapter 20 (cf. Num. 35.9-34), but actually Num. 35.1-8 is dependent on Jos. 21, since it assumes the arrangement of the cities of refuge within the system of Levitical settlements, which are secondary insertions in Jos. 21.

The list of settlements by tribes in verses 4-7 is secondary, as the extraordinary arrangement of the tribes indicates, this being superimposed on a primary geographical distribution. The repetition of verse 3 at verse 8a also indicates the secondary nature of verses 4-7, like the apportionment of the Levitical settlements by lot, which is artificially brought into conformity with the tribal apportionment by Eleazar the priest, Joshua, and 'the heads of fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel', at Shiloh (verses 1-2, see on 18.1). The secondary character of verses 4-7 is confirmed by the fact that in the lists of the actual settlements in verses 9-40 the arrangement is primarily geographical, the tribal distribution within the various regional areas being obviously artificial.

The peculiar geographical distribution of the four main Levitical families, if these are original, is hard to understand unless on the assumption that they had been deliberately settled as part of a regular policy in David's organization of his kingdom, into which Canaanite regions were incorporated. Thus they are thickly settled in the plains and on the frontiers (verses 21-25, 28-31, 34-35), with settlements beyond Jordan in what might be a frontier area (verses 36-39). From their strategic posting the Levites may have had a military purpose, though 1 Chr. 26.30 implies a fiscal function. Places with former local sanctuaries like Gibeon (verse 17), Shechem (verse 21), and probably Kedesh in Galilee (verse 32) may have been settled with Levites to counteract native religious influences; cf. Noth (op. cit., p. 127), who regards the cities, which are all cities of refuge, as secondary additions. Geba, Anathoth, and Almon in Benjamin (verses 17-18) may have been settled to counteract the political influence of Saul's kindred, and the country south-east and south-west of Hebron was a Kenizzite area, Hebron being probably a common

manded through Moses that we be given cities to dwell in, along with their pasture lands for our cattle.' <sup>3</sup> So by command of the LORD the people of Israel gave to the Levites the following cities and pasture lands out of their inheritance.

4 The lot came out for the families of the Ko'hathites. So those Levites who were descendants of Aaron the priest received by lot from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, thirteen cities.

shrine for Judah and the Kenizzites and Kenites. The Levites of Hebron were vital in David's administration according to 1 Chr. 26.29-32, but it is not certain whether Hebron was the chief centre of the Levites before David's employment of them, as 1 Chr. 26.29-32 describes, or whether they were settled there by him first to make Israelite influence dominant there and possibly to re-establish his influence after Absalom's revolt, and were subsequently settled elsewhere, late in his reign as 1 Chr. 26.31 suggests and as Jos. 21.8-40 describes. We have moreover to reckon with the further possibility that Jos. 21.8-40 reflects also a later settlement of Levites by Rehoboam, apparently with a strategic purpose (2 Chr. 11.13-17, esp. verse 17), and possibly also a similar settlement by Josiah after he recovered the southern part of Judah, which had been lost in the time of Hezekiah to Assyria (so Alt, *KS II*, 1953, pp. 310-15). Alt notes the correspondence between the Levitical settlements in Judah and the extent of the land covered by the fortresses ascribed to Rehoboam in 2 Chr. 11.6-10. To be sure, only two places, Aijalon and Hebron, are common to Jos. 21.9-40 and 2 Chr. 11.6-10, but the Levitical settlements are in the vicinity of certain of the fortresses, those in the Shephelah being in areas of doubtful loyalty, which would be even more doubtful after the truncation of the kingdom under Hezekiah (see further, General Introduction, pp. 26ff.).

The particular Levitical families, which are apparently unknown to the Chronicler in Ezr. 2.40=Neh. 7.43, but are mentioned in 1 Chr. 6.1, may be secondary and late.

In verses 9-30 the allocation is made by the people of Israel, nothing being said of the sacred lot or Eleazar the priest, Joshua, and the tribal heads at Shiloh (cf. verses 1-2).

**1. the heads of the fathers' houses:** a phrase characteristic of P in the description of the assembly of the sacral confederacy.

**2. at Shiloh in the land of Canaan:** in this peculiar post-exilic addition, 'the land of Canaan' may mean the Promised Land.

**commanded:** cf. Num. 35.2.

**pasture lands:** lit. 'places for driving out'; cf. the outfield of former British land economy.

**4-7.** Part of the introduction by a priestly redactor, who assumes three priestly

5 And the rest of the Ko'hathites received by lot from the families of the tribe of E'phraim, from the tribe of Dan and the half-tribe of Manas'seh, ten cities.

6 The Gershonites received by lot from the families of the tribe of Is'sachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naph'tali, and from the half-tribe of Manas'seh in Bashan, thirteen cities.

7 The Merar'ites according to their families received from the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and the tribe of Zeb'ulun, twelve cities.

8 These cities and their pasture lands the people of Israel gave by lot to the Levites, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

9 Out of the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Simeon they gave the following cities mentioned by name,<sup>10</sup> which went to the descendants of Aaron, one of the families of the Ko'hathites who belonged to the Levites; since the lot fell to them first.<sup>11</sup> They gave them Kir'iath-ar'ba (Arba being the father of Anak), that is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, along with the pasture lands round about it.<sup>12</sup> But the fields of the city and its villages had been given to Caleb the son of Jephun'neh as his possession.

13 And to the descendants of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron, the city of refuge for the slayer, with its pasture lands, Libnah with

clans, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, and the Aaronids, who were a family of the clan of Kohath (cf. Exod. 6.16; Num. 3.17, 26.57 (all P)). Owing to this affinity of the ruling family, Kohath is listed before the oldest clan Gershon. Here the redactor superimposes the tribal system on the geographical distribution of the Levites in verses 9-30. The association of the clan of Gershon with the north (verse 6; cf. verse 32) is significant in view of their association with the sanctuary of Dan in Jg. 18.30, which supports the antiquity of the tradition of the Levitical settlement.

#### *The Settlements of the Aaronid Branch of the Kohathite Clan 8-19*

In Judah, the Negeb (Simeon), and in Benjamin, according to Mazar's interpretation, which we have adopted, to strengthen the standing of the Davidic house in areas dominated by the Kenizzites in Hebron and the south and in Benjamin, where opposition might have been expected from the kinsmen of Saul (2 Sam. 16.5-14, 20.1-21). There may have been a strategic placing of Levites in places in those regions which were sanctuaries, e.g. **Gibeon** (verse 17), possibly **Eshtemoa**

its pasture lands, <sup>14</sup> Jattir with its pasture lands, Eshtemo'a with its pasture lands, <sup>15</sup> Holon with its pasture lands, Debir with its pasture lands, <sup>16</sup> A'in with its pasture lands, Juttah with its pasture lands, Beth-she'mesh with its pasture lands—nine cities out of these two tribes; <sup>17</sup> then out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its pasture lands, Geba with its pasture lands, <sup>18</sup> An'athoth with its pasture lands and Almon with its pasture lands—four cities. <sup>19</sup> The cities of the descendants of Aaron, the priests, were in all thirteen cities with their pasture lands.

20 As to the rest of the Ko'hathites belonging to the Ko'hathite families of the Levites, the cities allotted to them were out of the tribe of E'phraim. <sup>21</sup> To them were given Shechem, the city of refuge for the slayer, with its pasture lands in the hill country of E'phraim, Gezer with its pasture lands, <sup>22</sup> Kib'zaim with its pasture lands, Beth-hor'on with its pasture lands—four cities; <sup>23</sup> and out of

(verse 14), the name of which may suggest an oracle, possibly **Beth-shemesh** (verse 16), and certainly **Hebron** (verses 11, 13), the Levitical establishment of which was probably the basis of the whole system of David's strategic posting of the Levites according to the feasible view of Mazar, possibly with our modification (see General Introduction, pp. 28ff.). Besides, points in the west of the Shephelah, e.g. **Libnah** (verse 13), and **Beth-shemesh** (verse 16) were occupied possibly for strategic purposes, and the whole settlement may have subserved David's fiscal system. (On the various localities in Judah, see on 10.38-39, 15.15 (**Kiriath-sepher**), 14.15 (**Hebron**), 15.33-36 (**Beth-shemesh**), 10.29, 15.42-44a (**Libnah**); and for the districts where **Jattir**, **Holon**, and **Eshtemoa** were, 15.48-51, and where **Juttah** was, 15.55-57. On **Gibeon**, see 9.3.)

#### *The Settlement of other Branches of the Clan of Kohath 20-26*

In the hill country of Ephraim, not primarily the tribe (see on 20.7) as the inclusion of Shechem (actually in the tribal territory of Manasseh) indicates.

21. Here the settlement of **Shechem** may have been designed to safeguard the interest of David at a sanctuary where the old tradition of the sacral confederacy was strong and where the development of Jerusalem, the crown possession of David, as a new religious centre might well have been resented. It was here, in effect, that the democratic spirit of Israel asserted itself against the house of David under Rehoboam (1 Kg. 12). Moreover, Canaanite influence was also strong enough here to assert itself against Israel, as in the time of Abimelech (Jg. 9). Of the other settlements the known localities are on the border, e.g. **Beth-horon**



the tribe of Dan, El'teke, with its pasture lands, Gib'bethon with its pasture lands, <sup>24</sup>Ai'jalon with its pasture lands, Gath-rim'mon with its pasture lands—four cities; <sup>25</sup> and out of the half-tribe of Manas'seh, Ta'anach with its pasture lands, and Gath-rim'mon with its pasture lands—two cities. <sup>26</sup> The cities of the families of the rest of the Ko'hathites were ten in all with their pasture lands.

27 And to the Gershonites, one of the families of the Levites, were given out of the half-tribe of Manas'seh, Golan in Bashan with its pasture lands, the city of refuge for the slayer, and Be-esh'terah with its pasture lands—two cities; <sup>28</sup> and out of the tribe of Is'sachar, Kish'ion with its pasture lands, Dab'erath with its pasture lands, <sup>29</sup> Jarmuth with its pasture lands, En-gan'nim with its pasture lands—

(verse 22; see on 16.3), Aijalon (verse 24; see on 10.12), Gezer (verse 21; see on 10.33), Elteke, Gibbethon (verse 23), and Gath-rimmon (verse 24), on the border of the Philistine country. The last three places are feasibly identified with Tell el-Muqanna', Tell el-Melât, and possibly Tell Jerisheh on the River 'Aujâ (Jarkon) just north of Jaffa.

25. **Taanach**: the sudden appearance of this place so far north of the places in the plain between Jaffa and the foothills of Judah is suspect, and the repetition of Gath-rimmon increases suspicion of the text. 1 Chr. 6.70 (M.T. 55) reads 'Aner' for 'Taanach' and 'Bileam' (Ibleam) for 'Gath-rimmon' of the present passage.

#### *The Settlements of the Clan of Gershon in North Transjordan 27*

Two cities in North Transjordan are mentioned with other settlements in Galilee north of the great central plain. The region of North Transjordan may be suggested by the mention of **Be-eshterah**, Beth-eshtereh, taken as Ashtaroth in this region in 1 Chr. 6.71 (M.T. 56). In view of the redactional insertion of the cities of refuge in these lists the reference to Golan is doubtful. The connection between the northern part of the central plain and this area, however, was not unnatural, and the settlement of Levites in this frontier area would agree with such frontier settlements in the Shephelah.

#### *The Settlements of the Clan of Gershon in Galilee and the Northern Part of the Great Central Plain 28-33*

28. **Kishion**: surely connected with the River Kishon.

**Daberath**: at the foot of Tabor (see on 19.10-16).

29. **Jarmuth**: cf. the mention of 'the mountain(s) of Yarmuth' in the stele of Seti I from Bethshan, dated 1313 B.C. (Albright, *BASOR* 125, 1952, pp. 25ff.). Jarmuth is probably to be located near Jabbûl, north of Beisan.

four cities;<sup>30</sup> and out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with its pasture lands, Abdon with its pasture lands,<sup>31</sup> Helkath with its pasture lands, and Rehob with its pasture lands—four cities;<sup>32</sup> and out of the tribe of Naph'tali, Kedesh in Galilee with its pasture lands, the city of refuge for the slayer, Ham'moth-dor with its pasture lands, and Kartan with its pasture lands—three cities.<sup>33</sup> The cities of the several families of the Gershonites were in all thirteen cities with their pasture lands.

34 And to the rest of the Levites, the Merar'ite families, were given out of the tribe of Zeb'ulun, Jok'ne-am with its pasture lands, Kartah with its pasture lands,<sup>35</sup> Dimnah with its pasture lands, Na'halal with its pasture lands—four cities;<sup>36</sup> and out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with its pasture lands, Jahaz with its pasture lands,<sup>37</sup> Ked'emoth with its pasture lands, and Meph'a-ath with its pasture lands—four cities;<sup>38</sup> and out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in

**En-gannim:** Jenin (see on 19.17-23), but this seems out of context, so Anem may be read, as in 1 Chr. 6.73 (M.T. 58).

31. **Helkath:** in the south of the plain of Acco (see on 19.25).

**Rehob:** east of Acco (see on 19.24-31).

32. **Kedesh:** in upper Galilee (see on 12.19-23).

**Hammoth-dor . . . and Kartan:** read possibly 'Hammath' (by the hot springs south of Tiberias) after LXX, and 'Rakkath' after 19.35.

The comparatively thick settlement in the central plain and the foot-hills of Galilee may have been intended to strengthen the influence of Israel in the incorporation of the Canaanite cities here under David and Solomon.

#### *The Settlement of the Clan of Merari 34-40*

In the west of the great central plain and in south Transjordan.

This wide distribution of the Levites of Merari is unnatural except on the assumption of a deliberate policy of settlement, such as has been associated with David and Solomon.

On the settlements in Zebulun, see on 19.10-16.

35. **Dimnah** is possibly a corruption for Rimmon (cf. 19.13; 1 Chr. 6.77 (M.T. 62)).

36. **Jahaz:** cf. 13.18; located in the inscription of Mesha north of Dibon and south of Medeba by Eusebius.

37. **Kedemoth:** on the upper course of the Arnon according to Dt. 2.26; hence a border settlement.

38-39. On the settlements of Gad see on 13.24-28.

Gilead with its pasture lands, the city of refuge for the slayer. Mahana'im with its pasture lands,<sup>39</sup> Heshbon with its pasture lands, Jazer with its pasture lands—four cities in all.<sup>40</sup> As for the cities of the several Merar'ite families, that is, the remainder of the families of the Levites, those allotted to them were in all twelve cities.

41 The cities of the Levites in the midst of the possession of the people of Israel were in all forty-eight cities with their pasture lands.<sup>42</sup> These cities had each its pasture lands round about it; so it was with all these cities.

43 Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land which he swore to give to their fathers; and having taken possession of it, they settled there.<sup>44</sup> And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had

#### *Concluding Summary 41-42*

43-45. This belongs to the Deuteronomic compiler's conclusion to his presentation of the occupation of the Promised Land, and is properly the first part of his conclusion (cf. the programme in 1.15. See further introduction to the following section, pp. 180f.). The statement **not one of all their enemies had withstood them** ignores the incomplete nature of occupation as noted in Jg. 1, and indicates that the general subject of this part of the Deuteronomic history is the realization of the Promise rather than a detailed factual history. The long struggle to occupy Palestine in the face of reverses was known to the Deuteronomic historian, but was reserved as the subject of the next part of his work in Judges and 1 Samuel.

### 3. CONCLUSION 22-24

22.1-34. The dismissal of the Transjordan tribes (verses 1, 6, 7-8, 9) and the controversy over the altar in the Jordan valley (verses 10-34).

23.1-16. Joshua's farewell address, the original conclusion of the Deuteronomic compiler.

24.1-28. Another version of Joshua's farewell address, an appendix by the Deuteronomic redactor, and concluding notes on the death and burial of Joshua (verses 29-30), the fidelity of his contemporaries (verse 31), the burial of the bones of Joseph (verse 32) and the death and burial of Eleazar (verse 33).

The account of the occupation of the Promised Land in the Deuteronomic history in Joshua is rounded out with the statement of the fulfilment of the promise (21.43-45), the dismissal of the Transjordan tribes (22.1, 6, 9), recalling the theme and indeed the language of 1.12-18 (cf. Dt. 3.18-20), and Joshua's formal farewell

sworn to their fathers; not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands.<sup>45</sup> Not one of all the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

**22** Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manas'seh,<sup>2</sup> and said to them, 'You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I have commanded you;<sup>3</sup> you have not forsaken your brethren these many days, down to this day, but have been careful to keep the charge of the LORD your God.<sup>4</sup> And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brethren, as he promised

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(23.1-16), which is a homiletic elaboration of the older tradition of the sacrament of the Covenant at the assembly of the sacral community, which emerges clearly in chapter 24; or rather, this is the elaboration of the paraenetic address which concluded this ceremony, of which Dt. 28ff. is the best example. In 24.1-28, as distinct from 21.43-45, the occupation is admitted to be incomplete. Assimilation to the Canaanites is forbidden, and the discipline or favour of God conditional upon the reaction to the Canaanite way of life subserves the homiletic purpose of the Deuteronomist. The section chapters 22-24 has secondary expansions in the note on the dismissal and settlement of Manasseh (22.7-8), and in the controversy over the altar by Jordan (22.10-34), which, whatever its historical origin, is an elaboration reflecting Priestly influence. Also secondary are the description of the sacrament of the Covenant at Shechem (24.1-28), which, however, faithfully reflects an old tradition, the details of which the Deuteronomic redactor felt to have been insufficiently emphasized in chapter 23, and the note on the death and burial of Joshua (24.29-30), on the burial of the bones of Joseph at Shechem (verse 32), and on the death and burial of the priest Eleazar near by (verse 33).

#### THE RETURN OF THE TRANSJORDAN TRIBES 22.1-9

Verses 7-9 being secondary, see *ad loc.*

This is part of the literary pattern of the Deuteronomic historian (see introduction to Part 3), but the dismissal with the solemn injunction to 'observe the commandment and the law' (verse 5) probably reflects an element in the ceremony of the sacrament of the Covenant at the assembly of the sacral community, the *Sitz im Leben* of chapters 23 and 24.

**4. has given rest:** cf. Dt. 3.20; Jos. 1.15 (promise), 21.44 (fulfilment).

**to your home:** lit. 'tents' (cf. Dt. 5.30, 16.7), an anachronistic survival from



them; therefore turn and go to your home in the land where your possession lies, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan. <sup>5</sup> Take good care to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave to him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.' <sup>6</sup> So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away; and they went to their homes.

7 Now to the one half of the tribe of Manas'seh Moses had given a possession in Bashan; but to the other half Joshua had given a possession beside their brethren in the land west of the Jordan. And when Joshua sent them away to their homes and blessed them, <sup>8</sup> he said to them, 'Go back to your homes with much wealth, and with

Israel's past. The present passage indicates that it refers to the several homes of the people and not to the warriors' tents, as is sometimes supposed, in 1 Kg. 12.16.

5. Though the epitome of the faith of Israel, which emphasizes the free and devoted response to the personal approach of God (**to love the LORD your God . . . to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul**) as well as the pragmatic keeping of the law is in the characteristic terms and homiletic style of the Deuteronomist, it may still reflect an earlier formula of dismissal in the context of the paraenetic address in the Covenant-sacrament at the sacral assembly in the days of the settlement.

6. **blessed them**: formally secured them in the experience of God's favour effected by the renewal of the Covenant. The blessing, whereby one is associated with a subject known to possess the favour of God, often signifies either welcome or dismissal, and was held to be automatically effective. So Joshua takes leave of Caleb (14.13).

#### *The Dismissal of E. Manasseh and the Division of the Spoils 7-8*

The specific mention of this element apart from Reuben and Gad is suspect as a redactional expansion suggested by the secondary insertion of East Manasseh in the narrative in verses 9-31, which originally concerned only Reuben and Gad of the Transjordan tribes (verses 25, 32-34). The note on the division of the spoils of war (verse 8) may be a further expansion in respect of the principle attributed to David in 1 Sam. 30.24.

9. This verse, which is tautological after verse 7, is a later expansion, indicated by the description of Palestine west of Jordan as 'the land of Canaan' (see on verse 11).

very many cattle, with silver, gold, bronze, and iron, and with much clothing; divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.'<sup>9</sup> So the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manas'sēh returned home, parting from the people of Israel at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the land of Gilead, their own land of which they had possessed themselves by command of the LORD through Moses.

10 And when they came to the region about the Jordan, that lies in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manas'sēh built there an altar by the Jordan, an altar of great size.<sup>11</sup> And the people of Israel heard say, 'Behold, the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manas'sēh have built an altar at the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region about the Jordan, on the

#### THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE ALTAR IN THE JORDAN VALLEY 10-34

The anachronistic concern apparently over the one valid altar would seem to indicate D or P, and the hand of the latter, or at least a contemporary redactor, is apparent in the language and in the role of Phinehas the priest and representatives of the tribes of Israel, Joshua being unmentioned. The significance of the priests, the reference to the people as 'the congregation' (*hā-'ēdāh*), and the role of the sanctuary at Shiloh in the Book of Joshua all seem to point to the post-exilic redactor. This passage, however, is composite, and the older element may be based on an older historical tradition, and is partly an aetiological tradition explaining the name of the altar, 'Witness' (verse 34). Möhlenbrink feasibly conjectures that it is the reminiscence of a conflict between Shiloh and Gilgal as the central sanctuary of a smaller confederacy comprising Reuben, Gad, and Benjamin, an episode in the development of the sacral confederacy of the twelve tribes (*ZAW*, N.F. XV, 1938, pp. 246ff.). This situation might account for certain variants in the occupation tradition associated with Gilgal, particularly those concerning Gad and Reuben (see on 4.19).

**10. the region about the Jordan:** Hebrew *g'îlôlî*, lit. 'circles'. A geographical term, cf. 18.17 (between Benjamin and Judah); cf. 13.2. LXX and the Syriac have 'Gilgal', but verse 10b states that the altar was built on the actual bank of the Jordan.

**an altar of great size:** (lit. 'great in appearance'). Anticipating the claim that it was simply monumental (cf. verse 27).

**11. at the frontier of the land of Canaan:** so LXX for M.T. 'opposite . . .'. Throughout this chapter 'the land of Canaan', denoting Palestine as distinct from Transjordan, characterizes passages which are otherwise suspect as late and

side that belongs to the people of Israel.' <sup>12</sup> And when the people of Israel heard of it, the whole assembly of the people of Israel gathered at Shiloh, to make war against them.

<sup>13</sup> Then the people of Israel sent to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manas'seh, in the land of Gilead, Phin'ehas the son of Elea'zar the priest, <sup>14</sup> and with him ten chiefs, one from each of the tribal families of Israel, every one of them the head of a family among the clans of Israel. <sup>15</sup> And they came to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manas'seh, in the land of Gilead, and they said to them, <sup>16</sup> 'Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD, "What is this treachery which you have committed against the God of Israel in turning away this day from following the LORD, by building yourselves an altar this day in rebellion against the LORD?" <sup>17</sup> Have we not had enough of the sin at Pe'or from which

redactional, e.g. 'Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan' (verse 9), 'the region about the Jordan, that lies in the land of Canaan' (verse 10).

**on the side that belongs to the people of Israel** surely indicates a date not earlier than the time of Josiah, and probably after the Exile; cf. Ezekiel 48, where the new apportionment is confined to west of Jordan.

**in the region about the Jordan:** see on verse 10. The Syriac reads 'Gilgal' here also, but LXX<sup>a</sup> reads, wrongly, 'Gilead'.

**12. to make war against them:** lit. 'to go up against them to war'. The Jordan valley was much lower than Shiloh, which indicates that 'to go up' is a technical term meaning 'to go to war', and is so used often absolutely, without 'to war' as here (cf. Jg. 1.1, 6.3, 12.3, 15.10, 18.9, 20.9).

**13. Phinehas:** cf. Exod. 6.25; Num. 25.7 and chapter 31. Represented as active on this mission as befitted his age, his father Eleazar being represented in the redaction on the apportionment as still alive.

**14. ten chiefs:** Ephraim and West Manasseh must have been visualized as separately represented, Levi being represented by Phinehas. 'Chiefs' means literally 'those put up', i.e. as delegates from the tribe to the amphictyonic assembly (Noth, *Das System der zwölf Stämme* (BWANT IV, 1), 1930, pp. 151ff.).

**families:** possibly 'thousands', referring to the number theoretically provided by each clan within the tribe (so de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 1961, p. 216).

**16. the whole congregation of the LORD:** a characteristically Priestly term, but on the general significance of Hebrew 'ēdāh (here 'congregation'), see on 18.1. **treachery:** (Hebrew *ma'al*), characteristically P (see on 7.1).

**17. the sin at Peor:** see Num. 25.1-9; Dt. 4.3. For the plague, see Num. 25.3,

even yet we have not cleansed ourselves, and for which there came a plague upon the congregation of the LORD, <sup>18</sup> that you must turn away this day from following the LORD? And if you rebel against the LORD today he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel tomorrow. <sup>19</sup> But now, if your land is unclean, pass over into the LORD's land where the LORD's tabernacle stands, and take for yourselves a possession among us; only do not rebel against the LORD, or make us as rebels by building yourselves an altar other than the altar of the LORD our God. <sup>20</sup> Did not Achan the son of Zerah break faith in the matter of the devoted things, and wrath fell upon all the congregation of Israel? And he did not perish alone for his iniquity.”

21 Then the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manas'seh said in answer to the heads of the families of Israel, <sup>22</sup> 'The

8, 9. The role of Phinehas in this incident must be emphasized, and probably suggested his role in the present passage.

18. **angry with the whole congregation:** this emphasizes the conception of the solidarity of the society; see on 7.1, where the whole congregation was involved in the sin of Achan, which is explicitly cited here (verse 20).

19. This may reflect an independent tradition of the allegation by the Trans-jordan tribes that they had built an altar east of the river to hallow the land. It may, on the other hand, be a reconstruction by the Priestly redactor, for whom the land west of the Jordan was properly the Holy Land (cf. Ezek. 48), hallowed by the one legitimate sanctuary, here described as **the LORD'S land where the LORD'S tabernacle stands**. Apart from 'the tent of meeting' (Hebrew *'ōhel ham-mō'ēd*) at Shiloh (18.1), this is the only mention of the tent-sanctuary (*miškān*) in Joshua, where the symbol of God's presence is the Ark. The tent of meeting, associated properly with the oracle (Exod. 33.7-11, E) belongs to the desert tradition, and seems originally independent of the Ark. The 'tabernacle' (*miškān*) is a Priestly modification of the conception of the Temple as God's dwelling-place, which is accommodated in the theology of P to the conception of the tent of meeting, where God occasionally condescends to meet man at his own discretion (so G. von Rad, 'Zelt und Lade', *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, 1958, pp. 109-29).

22. **The Mighty One, God, the LORD:** the triplication of divine titles is repeated as the preface to an adjuration. El was the name of the High God of the patriarchs and known to the Canaanites as supreme over gods and men. Used of the God of Israel, apart from patriarchal religion, it is late and poetic. Here RSV



Mighty One, God, the LORD! The Mighty One, God, the LORD! He knows; and let Israel itself know! If it was in rebellion or in breach of faith toward the LORD, spare us not today <sup>23</sup> for building an altar to turn away from following the LORD; or if we did so to offer burnt offerings or cereal offerings or peace offerings on it, may the LORD himself take vengeance. <sup>24</sup> Nay, but we did it from fear that in time to come your children might say to our children, "What have you to do with the LORD, the God of Israel?" <sup>25</sup> For the LORD has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you, you Reubenites and Gadites; you have no portion in the LORD." So your children might make our children cease to worship the LORD. <sup>26</sup> Therefore we said, "Let us now build an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice, <sup>27</sup> but to

emphasizes the possible root-meaning of 'strength' ('*ālāh*), though the root may rather be '*āl*' ('to be foremost'). We prefer to regard the first name (Hebrew '*ēl*') as the proper name of the High God, the second (Hebrew '*lōhīm*') the generic term, and the third (Hebrew '*yhw*') the peculiar name of the God of the sacral community of Israel, who assimilated the universal status and functions of the High God, particularly through the development of the cult at Jerusalem (H. Schmid, 'Jahwe und die Kulttraditionen von Jerusalem', *ZAW*, N.F. XXVI, 1955, pp. 168-97; W. Schmidt, 'Königtum Gottes in Ugarit und Israel', *BZAW* LXXX, 1961).

**23. burnt offerings . . . cereal offerings . . . peace offerings:** the first term ('*ōlōt*') denotes offerings made wholly over to God, of which the worshipper did not partake, as distinct from the last type of offering RSV 'peace-offerings', better 'communion-offerings' (Hebrew '*š'lamīm*'), where the worshippers, partaking of the same victim as had been partially offered to God, effected solidarity with him and with one another. The second category (Hebrew '*minḥāh*') is obviously the bloodless offering in the present context, as distinct from '*ōlāh*' and '*š'lamīm*'. In earlier usage '*minḥāh*' may also denote the sacrifice of a slaughtered beast (1 Kg. 18.29), hence the present usage indicates the sacrificial system of P (e.g. Lev. 1, 2, and 3).

**24. from fear:** better 'from anxiety', implied in verse 19, where it is implied that the altar was built to hallow the land where the Transjordanian tribes were settled. RSV, after the Syriac version, omits the following word '*middāḥār*' (AV 'and of purpose'). This phrase might be translated 'on account of a particular thing', but there may be a nuance of an Arabic cognate in the Hebrew '*dāḥār*', which means in the intensive of the verbal root 'to pre-arrange'.

**26.** The lack of an object after the transitive verb 'to make' indicates a lacuna of at least one word.

**27. a witness:** cf. the stone set up by Joshua as an inanimate witness of the

be a witness between us and you, and between the generations after us, that we do perform the service of the LORD in his presence with our burnt offerings and sacrifices and peace offerings; lest your children say to our children in time to come, "You have no portion in the LORD." <sup>28</sup>And we thought, If this should be said to us or to our descendants in time to come, we should say, "Behold the copy of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between us and you." <sup>29</sup>Far be it from us that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn away this day from following the LORD by building an altar for burnt offering, cereal offering, or sacrifice, other than the altar of the LORD our God that stands before his tabernacle!

<sup>30</sup>When Phin'ehash the priest and the chiefs of the congregation, the heads of the families of Israel who were with him, heard the words that the Reubenites and the Gadites and the Manas'sites spoke, it pleased them well. <sup>31</sup>And Phin'ehash the son of Elea'zar the priest said to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the Manas'sites, 'Today we know that the LORD is in the midst of us, because you have not committed this treachery against the LORD; now you have saved the people of Israel from the hand of the LORD.'

<sup>32</sup>Then Phin'ehash the son of Elea'zar the priest, and the chiefs, returned from the Reubenites and the Gadites in the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the people of Israel, and brought back word to them. <sup>33</sup>And the report pleased the people of Israel; and the people of Israel blessed God and spoke no more of making war against them, to destroy the land where the Reubenites and the Gadites were

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covenant at the assembly of the sacral community (24.26-27, on which see), and the 'cairn of witness' in the popular etymology of 'Gilead' in Gen. 31.48. 'Witness' was apparently one element in the name of the feature, as indicated in verse 34, where unfortunately the name has dropped out. It has been plausibly conjectured that the name was 'Gilead', and that the tradition was perhaps a variant of the popular etymology on Gen. 31.47ff.

**perform the service:** not officiate, but worship.

**28. copy:** better 'pattern' or 'construction' (cf. Dt. 4.16).

**29. Far be it from us:** lit. 'Unholy to us' (cf. *ad profanum*).

settled. <sup>34</sup> The Reubenites and the Gadites called the altar Witness; 'For,' said they, 'it is a witness between us that the LORD is God.'

**23** A long time afterward, when the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, and Joshua was old and well advanced in years, <sup>2</sup> Joshua summoned all Israel, their elders and heads, their judges and officers, and said to them, 'I am now old and well advanced in years; <sup>3</sup> and you have seen all that the LORD your

**34. Witness:** so RSV after the Syriac version. In the M.T. the name of the altar has dropped out.

#### JOSHUA'S FAREWELL ADDRESS 23.1-16

Modelled on the admonition of the conditional nature of God's grace to Israel in the sacrament of the Covenant, as chapter 24 makes explicit, this serves the same literary purpose in marking a period in the occupation of the Promised Land as Moses' speech in Deuteronomy 1-11 and 29-30 on the eve of the fulfilment of the promise, which is also related by the Deuteronomic compiler to the sacrament of the Covenant in anticipation of the assembly of the sacral community at Shechem. It resumes the compiler's theme of God's grace in the fulfilment of the promise conditional upon the keeping of the law expressed in the Deuteronomic introduction to Joshua in chapter 1, the language of which it re-echoes. The homiletic tone emphasizes that these are not so much the words of Joshua to his contemporaries as the words of the Deuteronomic historian addressed to Israel of all time, and particularly to his contemporaries at the end of the monarchy. This is in fact an adumbration of the whole Deuteronomic historical work from the Settlement to the Exile (Deuteronomy-Kings) on the major theme of the operation of the word of God (the blessing and curse in the sacrament of the Covenant) in history.

**1. A long time afterward, when the LORD had given rest . . . :** implies the struggle for occupation, which is the theme of Judges rather than Joshua.

**rest:** the keynote of the conclusion to Joshua, but also of the pattern of the settlement in Judges.

**2. all Israel:** represented at the amphictyonic assembly by various representatives, all of whom except the heads are explicitly mentioned in the sacrament of the Covenant in the assembly at Shechem in 8.33, to which the present passage and the following chapter relate; cf. Dt. 28.1ff., relating to the same occasion, when all categories except 'the heads' are explicitly mentioned. On officers and their role in mustering the people, see on 1.10.

**3. it is the LORD your God who has fought for you:** cf. 'the nations that

God has done to all these nations for your sake, for it is the LORD your God who has fought for you. <sup>4</sup> Behold, I have allotted to you as an inheritance for your tribes those nations that remain, along with all the nations that I have already cut off, from the Jordan to the Great Sea in the west. <sup>5</sup> The LORD your God will push them back before you, and drive them out of your sight; and you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God promised you. <sup>6</sup> Therefore be very steadfast to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left, <sup>7</sup> that you may not be mixed with these nations left here among you, or make mention of the names of their gods, or swear by them, or

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remain' (verse 4). Here again, in contrast to 21.44, there emerges the paradox between faith and history, the theme of God's complete victory in the occupation of the Promised Land, which faith asserted in the cult (e.g. Ps. 44.1-3), and the sober fact that the supremacy of Israel in the Land of Promise was not established until the time of David. Various attempts are made by the Deuteronomic theologian to solve this paradox, the one favoured here being that the potential menace of the unconquered Canaanites accentuated the conditional grace of God in the Covenant (verses 5ff.). This occasion subserves the purpose of the Deuteronomic historian at the end of the monarchy when the deportations of North Israel were a *fait accompli* and the deportations from Judah at least an imminent possibility (cf. verses 13-16).

**4. those nations that remain:** implies the particularist tendency among the natives of Palestine, largely originating in their ethnic diversity, e.g. Canaanites, Hittites, etc., and fostered by regional and climatic diversity.

**with all the nations that I have already cut off:** probably a later addition, which has upset the original text.

**to (the Great Sea):** should be inserted into M.T.; so *RSV*.

**6. be very steadfast:** lit. 'hold firm', a characteristic phrase of Deuteronomic exhortation (cf. 1.6, 7, 9, 18).

**the book of the law of Moses:** is also a late Deuteronomic conception (see on 1.7).

**7. make mention of the names:** pronounce the names and so realize the presence, or at least admit the reality of, the gods invoked (cf. Exod. 23.13).

**swear:** so *RSV* correctly with the Syriac and Aramaic versions and the Targum, with a change of the vowels of M.T. The various prohibitions, including inter-marriage with its implication of recognition of the way of life and faith of the other party and the influence on the children of the union, reflect the strenuous efforts to assert the distinctively nationalist faith of Israel at the end of the monarchy, of which Josiah's reformation was the expression. In the active days of the tribal



serve them, or bow down yourselves to them,<sup>8</sup> but cleave to the LORD your God as you have done to this day.<sup>9</sup> For the LORD has driven out before you great and strong nations; and as for you, no man has been able to withstand you to this day.<sup>10</sup> One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the LORD your God who fights for you, as he promised you.<sup>11</sup> Take good heed to yourselves, therefore, to love the LORD your God.<sup>12</sup> For if you turn back, and join the remnant of these nations left here among you, and make marriages with them, so that you marry their women and they yours,<sup>13</sup> know assuredly that the LORD your God will not continue to drive out these nations before you; but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a scourge on your sides, and thorns in your eyes, till you perish from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

14 'And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God promised concerning you; all have come to pass for you, not one of them has failed.<sup>15</sup> But just as all the good things which the LORD your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the LORD will bring upon you all the evil things, until he have destroyed you

confederacy also, however, precautions were no doubt taken against the same dangers in the sacrament of the Covenant, the tradition behind the present passage. In this context **serve** (strange gods) and **bow down to them** (cf. verse 16) significantly re-echo the commandment in the Decalogue (Exod. 20.5), which is relevant to the same occasion. The negative particle and mood of the verb are those of solemn divine prohibition proper to such an occasion.

**10. puts to flight a thousand:** note the frequentative tense. For the hyperbole, cf. the psalm in Dt. 32.30.

**12. turn back:** the Hebrew verb (*šûb*) means both 'to return to God' and 'to apostatize', the latter being the meaning here.

**13. snare . . . trap:** on particular dangers from mixed marriages see on verse 7. **scourge:** better 'scourges', with a slight change of the last Hebrew consonant and vowels.

**thorns in your eyes** is a conventional description of the continued vexation of alien elements aggravated by toleration.

**14. to go the way of all the earth:** so David speaks of his death to Solomon (1 Kg. 2.2).

from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you, <sup>16</sup> if you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land which he has given to you.'

**24** Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers

#### APPENDIX 24.1-33

##### *The Pledge to serve the Lord, in the Context of the Covenant Sacrament in the Assembly of the Sacral Community at Shechem 1-28*

The regular practice on that occasion is reflected. It has been contended (Sellin, Noth) that the passage relates to the foundation of the twelve-tribe amphictyony including the older elements of the Hebrew kinship, with whom the newcomers now united on the basis of the experience of the Great Deliverance and the Covenant, now sacramentally communicated to the older groups. The emphasis on renunciation of elements of worship foreign to Yahwism might seem to support this view with respect to the older groups who had not yet experienced the particular knowledge of Yahweh which was the genesis of the vital, even aggressive, faith of those who now settled in the land. On the other hand this renunciation and rededication might be a regular feature of the Covenant Sacrament, as Genesis 35 (see on verse 14) indicates, and if the passage referred primarily to the inauguration of the twelve-tribe amphictyony there should surely be more explicit evidence than the passage actually contains (see General Introduction, pp. 35f.). The passage, which includes certain elements of the Covenant Sacrament (e.g. verses 24-27) together with a free construction of other elements on the basis of all main strands of the Pentateuch, is elaborated to supplement the Deuteronomic compiler's conclusion with Joshua's address in chapter 23 in order to put this more explicitly in its proper setting of the Covenant Sacrament, the paraenetic elaboration of the final adjurations of which (cf. Dt. 27.15-26 and the immediate sequel Dt. 28-30) it reflects. For details of literary analysis and traditio-historical affinity, see General Introduction, pp. 33-37. Formally the alternation between 'you' and 'your fathers' in the recapitulation of the Exodus theme has been taken as evidence of parallel sources, respectively the older Southern, or L, source and of E (e.g. Eissfeldt, *Hexateuch-Synopse*, 1922, pp. 79ff.), but this may reflect rather the repetition of the well-known theme and its sacramental appropriation by succeeding generations, reflecting also the historical recital of the cult-legend and its application to those

of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. <sup>2</sup>And Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, "Your fathers lived of old beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods. <sup>3</sup> Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac;

present in the accompanying harangue (cf. Dt. 5.3, 26.5-9 for the sacramental appropriation of the Covenant and the Drama of Salvation).

*The Calling of the Assembly of the Sacral Community I*

The shrine ('before God') is Shechem in the country of Manasseh, which was associated with the sacrament of the Covenant in the sacral confederacy in 8.30-35 and Dt. 27.12ff., passages which reproduce, like 24.1-28, the essential elements of the ritual of this sacrament. The note on the elders, heads, judges, and officers of Israel may also reflect custom on this occasion (cf. 8.33), but in this case it may be a Deuteronomic expansion after 23.2. On the 'elders', see on 8.33, and on 'officers' on 1.10.

*The Historic Preamble 2-13*

As in Hittite vassal treaties of the 14th and 13th centuries, this cites God's grace and power as the basis of his claim to exclusive allegiance (verse 14). See General Introduction, p. 33.

**2. Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel:** this is properly the title of Yahweh in the assembly of the sacral confederacy at the central shrine (C. Steuernagel, 'Jahweh der Gott Israel', *BZAW* XXVII, 1914, pp. 329ff.). It implies the rededication of the sacral community to Yahweh and the renunciation of strange gods, which was a feature of this occasion (verses 14-24; cf. Gen. 35.2-4, also located at Shechem), and is an essential element in the apodictic law (e.g. Exod. 20.3-5), which related to that occasion (Alt, 'Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts', *KS I*, 1953, pp. 325ff.). The prophetic introduction 'Thus says the Lord' emphasizes the sacramental significance of what follows.

**Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor:** cf. Gen. 11.27ff. (J and P). Perhaps Terah and Nahor are mentioned to except Abraham from the charge of worship of strange gods.

**served other gods:** this is not stated in the relevant narrative sources of the Pentateuch but in Jubilees 11.16ff. and 12; cf. the Qur'an, Surah xxi (*el-Anbiya'*).

**3. I took your father Abraham . . . and made his offspring many:** a direct reference to the tradition of the call of Abraham (Gen. 12.1-4a, J).

**beyond the River:** i.e. the Euphrates (Gen. 31.21).

<sup>4</sup> and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. And I gave Esau the hill country of Se'ir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. <sup>5</sup>And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in the midst of it; and afterwards I brought you out. <sup>6</sup> Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. <sup>7</sup>And when they cried to the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and made the sea come upon them and cover them; and your eyes saw what I did to Egypt; and you

4. The mention of **Isaac, Jacob, and Esau** implies the emphasis on the election of Israel.

Esau's possession of **Mount Seir** is possibly introduced to emphasize by contrast the bondage of the house of Jacob in Egypt and the special grace of God in her deliverance. Mount Seir, though occasionally referring to the western escarpment of the Arabah (11.17), also refers to the highlands of Edom proper east of the Arabah, modern Jebel esh-Shera', in the heart of which the Edomite fortress at Umm el-Biyāra in the canyon of Petra was situated.

5. The mention of **Moses and Aaron** together in the deliverance from Egypt is evidently borrowed from the narrative sources of the Pentateuch in their literary form, but the omission of verse 5a in LXX makes the verse suspect as a later expansion.

**I plagued Egypt:** an essential motif in the tradition of the deliverance from Egypt in J, E, and P. The plagues, intensifying until the last fatal visitation, traditionally on the night of the deliverance, are feasibly taken by Pedersen ('Passafest und Passalegende', *ZAW*, N.F. XI, 1934, pp. 161-75) as belonging to the legend of the cult-drama of the Passover in the context of the Drama of Salvation. In the certainly dramatic arrangement of this tradition cult-drama and popular saga have influenced each other, and the tradition has become the basis of Exodus 1-15, particularly in the J version, which culminates in the psalm in Exodus 15, which is probably from the early monarchy.

6. **to the Red Sea:** actually 'the Sea of Reeds', Hebrew *yam sūp* (Egyptian *twfi*, 'papyrus'). This, as the name implies, was a fresh-water lagoon in the east of the Delta, the locality varying in the various narrative traditions of the Pentateuch from the region of the Bitter Lakes at the eastern end of the Wādī Ṭumilāt to Lake Manzāleh south-east of Tanis (Zoan), also called Pi-Ramesse (Ramses), modern Ṣān el-Ḥagar in the north-east of the Delta. This is the culmination of the Great Deliverance.

7. **darkness between you and the Egyptians:** it is noteworthy that the most sober tradition of the Great Deliverance at the Red Sea (Exod. 14.10-14, 19-20, J)



lived in the wilderness a long time. <sup>8</sup> Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites, who lived on the other side of the Jordan; they fought with you, and I gave them into your hand, and you took possession of their land, and I destroyed them before you. <sup>9</sup> Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel; and he sent and invited Balaam the son of Be'or to curse you, <sup>10</sup> but I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he blessed you; so I

is used here, where the miracle is confined to the element of coincidence. The chariots and horsemen play a conspicuous part in the psalm in Exod. 15.1, 4. The alternation between narrative in the third person ('your fathers') and direct address ('you came to the sea') in this passage (verse 6) reflects Israel's sacramental experience of the Drama of Salvation in the cult.

**8. the land of the Amorites:** the occupation of the Promised Land is the culmination of the Great Deliverance and the desert wandering. The use of the term 'Amorite' to denote all the inhabitants of Palestine encountered by Israel, as distinct from one part of them, is unique in Joshua and in the older narrative sources of the Pentateuch, and confirms the distinct character of Joshua 24. In what seems like a citation from the liturgy of the Covenant sacrament, adapted in the convention of the divine controversy with his people, Amos (2.9-11) uses 'Amorite' in the same sense as Jos. 24.8. The citation of the historical preamble, however, with the implication of the Covenant in precisely this form in Amos (2.9-10, to be read in the order 10-9), indicates that behind Jos. 24.1-28 lies the stereotyped formula of the cult.

**I gave them into your hand:** the conception recurs with variation in verses 10b and 11b and may be, as Noth suggests (*Das Buch Josua*, 2nd ed., p. 137), an idiom from the tradition of the Holy War, being part of the oracle in that context (cf. 6.2).

**I destroyed them from before you:** after 'I gave them into your hand' this is probably a redactional expansion.

**9. Balak . . . king of Moab . . . fought against Israel:** unless the verb means 'began to fight' (so E. Nielsen, *Shechem*, 1955, p. 95), this is a notable divergence from Pentateuchal tradition (cf. Dt. 2.9; Jg. 11.25). The redactor seems to be conscious of this in adding the note on Balaam (verses 9b-10a) from Num. 22.5ff. (J and E), which re-echoes the language of Dt. 23.5.

**10. blessed you:** M.T. 'went on blessing you', a reference to the series of blessings of Israel in the oracles of Balaam in Num. 23.7-10, 18-24 (E) and 24.3-9, 15-19 (J), and the oracle against the Amalekites (Num. 24.20, J) and the later oracles against the Kenites (Num. 24.21-22) and Assyria (Num. 24.24).

**11-13.** The occupation of the Promised Land, as in chapters 2-12, though in

delivered you out of his hand. <sup>11</sup>And you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho, and the men of Jericho fought against you, and also the Amorites, the Per'izzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Gir'gashites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites; and I gave them into your hand. <sup>12</sup>And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out before you, the two kings of the Amorites; it was not by your sword or by your bow. <sup>13</sup>I gave you a land on which you had not laboured, and cities which you had not built, and you dwell therein; you eat the fruit of vineyards and oliveyards which you did not plant."

<sup>14</sup> 'Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. <sup>15</sup>And if you be unwilling

general terms, the only particular event referred to being the defeat of the men of Jericho *in battle*, which significantly disagrees with chapter 6. Here only verse 11a to 'fought against you' and 'I gave them into your hand' in verse 11b and possibly verse 13 are original, and the rest Deuteronomic expansion. 'Even the kings of the Amorites' may be a secondary gloss on the indefinite 'them' in verse 12a. Here LXX has an interesting reading 'twelve kings of the Amorites', perhaps a stylization of the enemies defeated west of the Jordan (cf. chapter 12). In view of the correspondence of the description of the Promised Land in verse 13 with Dt. 6.10-11, Noth (op. cit., p. 135) takes this as a Deuteronomic expansion. But these details may go back to the form of vassal treaties of the 14th and 13th centuries, in which the definition of territories and boundaries is a convention.

**12. hornet:** Hebrew *šir'āh*, only here and in Exod. 23.28 (E) and in Dt. 7.20, the meaning being suggested by LXX. Garstang took this as a reference to the Egyptian expeditions to Palestine in the Nineteenth Dynasty, which weakened native opposition, the bee being the symbol of Lower Egypt (*Joshua and Judges*, 1931, pp. 259-60, with illustration, Pl. I). Actually the word probably means 'enervation'; cf. Arabic *ḍara'a*, 'to submit' (L. Koehler, *ZAW*, N.F. XIII, 1936, p. 291), divinely inspired panic being a regular feature of the holy war.

#### *God's Claim to the Sole Allegiance of His Beneficiaries 14*

Again, as in the Hittite vassal treaties.

**and in Egypt:** probably a redactional gloss, unless this is related in the Covenant ceremony to the discarding of amulets with a pagan significance, like figurines of hippopotamus, cat, ape, the grotesque dwarf Bes, and Horus, and the Horus eye, which are familiar in archaeological sites in Syria and Palestine in the Late Bronze

to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.'

16 Then the people answered, 'Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; <sup>17</sup> for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; <sup>18</sup> and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land; therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.'

19 But Joshua said to the people, 'You cannot serve the LORD; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your trans-

and Early Iron Ages. Such a rite is referred to in the burial of such objects under the oak at Shechem in Gen. 35.4 (E); cf. the discarding of ornaments, also in the context of the Covenant, in Exod. 33.5-6 (E).

### *Joshua's Personal Challenge to Decision 15*

A significant departure from the established pattern in the Covenant ceremony, and as such possibly reflecting the original foundation of the sacral confederacy at Shechem, as Sellin and Noth (op. cit., p. 139) maintained.

**my house:** this may refer to the house of Joseph represented by Joshua, whose distinctive place in history may have been the role he played in mediating the covenant to the assembly of Israel, including those who had not actually experienced the Great Deliverance and Covenant in the desert (see General Introduction, pp. 45f.).

### *The Appropriation of the Covenant 16-18 (and probably 19-24)*

With summary recapitulation of the historical preamble.

### **19-24**

This passage, where Joshua again brings the people to the point of decision for God, is generally taken to be tautological after their decision in verse 18 and is thought to be redactional. Ancient literary and oral narrative knew the convention of accentuating a point by making it controversial, e.g. Moses' controversy with Pharaoh before the deliverance, Baal's controversy with the divine craftsman over



gressions or your sins.<sup>20</sup> If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good.'<sup>21</sup> And the people said to Joshua, 'Nay; but we will serve the LORD.'<sup>22</sup> Then Joshua said to the people, 'You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him.' And they said, 'We are witnesses.'<sup>23</sup> He said, 'Then put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD, the God of Israel.'<sup>24</sup> And the people said to Joshua, 'The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey.'<sup>25</sup> So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and

a roof-shutter in his temple in the Rās Shamra texts, which was the vital element in a rite of imitative magic to induce rain, etc. Moreover, this opens the way for Joshua's admonition with its implication of blessing and curse and the solemn citation of witnesses, all of which were essential elements in the vassal treaties to which chapter 24 formally corresponds. **And they said, 'We are witnesses'** (verse 22), which interrupts the unbroken speech of Joshua, is almost certainly a later interpolation, and is omitted in LXX.

**24. his voice will we obey:** together with exclusive service (i.e. worship), on which the passage repeatedly insists, obedience to God's categorical demands is required, such as conserved not only the purity of worship, but the distinctive nature and integrity of the sacral community, as in the Decalogue and other fragments of apodictic law in the Book of the Covenant, and the Twelve Adjurations (Dt. 27.15-26) (so Alt, 'Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts', KS I, 1953, p. 324ff.).

#### *The Making, perhaps Renewal, of the Covenant 25*

This is between Israel through her representative Joshua and Yahweh; cf. the role of Moses as mediator of the Covenant, and of Josiah in 2 Kg. 23.3.

**covenant:** see on 9.7.

**statutes and ordinances:** the plural, possibly suggested to the RSV translators by 'these words' in the sequel, naturally suggests both apodictic laws (perhaps *hukkim*, 'statutes') and casuistic law (perhaps *mišpāṭim*, 'ordinances'), declared by the mediator of the Covenant in the name of God (cf. Exod. 24.3ff.), which crystallized into the Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20.22-23.33) in the Sinai tradition. In the vagueness of the passage, and in view of the emphasis on 'service' (i.e. worship), e.g. verses 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, G. Schmitt (*Der Landtag von Sichem*, 1964) suggests that the statutes and ordinances may be ritual ordinances like the Ritual Code in Exod. 34.10-26. Of equal importance, however, with the preservation of



ordinances for them at Shechem. <sup>26</sup> And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak in the sanctuary of the LORD. <sup>27</sup> And Joshua said to all the people, 'Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it has heard all the words of the LORD which he spoke to us; therefore it shall be a witness against you, lest you deal falsely with your God.' <sup>28</sup> So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance.

purity of worship in this context, was the preservation of the character of the sacral community, to which the ethical commands in the Decalogue and fragments of apodictic codes in the Book of the Covenant are directed. Whatever may have been the nature of the 'statutes and ordinances', they could not be elaborated in the present context, though their particular character was assumed by the writer as well known to all.

#### *The Written Record of the Covenant 26*

Also its deposit at the sanctuary, as in vassal treaties of the 14th and 13th centuries, which were invalid without such written record (see General Introduction, p. 35).

The conception of **the book of the law of God** is probably late, however, suggested by the Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20.22-23.33). The original record at the central shrine of the sacral community was more probably a short series of apodictic laws on a standing stone (cf. Dt. 27.2-4; Jos. 8.32), which may have been the source of the tradition of the two stone tablets of the law at Sinai.

**the oak:** (Hebrew *hā-'allāh*). The form is peculiar to this passage; cf. Gen. 35.4 ('*ēlāh*'), which also refers to Shechem. Gen. 12.6; Dt. 11.30; Jg. 9.37 refer to an oracle-terebinth ('*ēlōn*') at Shechem, which, apart from vowels, differs from the Hebrew word only in the last consonant. This tree may be visualized in the sanctuary (so RSV), which would be a large bounded precinct rather than a built shrine in the fashion of the Moslem Sacred Area (Ḥaram esh-Sharif) in Jerusalem.

**a great stone, and set it up there under the oak . . .** cf. the twelve standing stones for the same purpose in Exod. 24.4 (E). The 'twelve stones' is probably a later tradition developed from the single stone of witness at the amphictyonic cult-centre at Shechem (cf. Jg. 9.6). Here also the Israelite tradition of the Covenant reflects the usage exemplified in the Hittite vassal treaties, where all the gods, elements, and natural features are called to witness, probably as the seats of gods. Though Israelite monotheism excluded such attestation by other gods, the stone as witness (verse 27) may be a half-conscious survival of the more primitive conception.

29 After these things Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being a hundred and ten years old.<sup>30</sup> And they buried him in his own inheritance at Tim'nath-se'rah, which is in the hill country of E'phraim, north of the mountain of Ga'ash.

31 And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work which the LORD did for Israel.

32 The bones of Joseph which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt were buried at Shechem, in the portion of ground which Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money; it became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph.

33 And Elea'zar the son of Aaron died and they buried him at

*The Tradition of the Graves of Joshua (verses 29-30), Joseph (verse 32), and Eleazar (verse 33) 29-33*

The latter two were near Shechem and that of Joshua on one of the pilgrim roads from the foot hills of central Palestine to Shechem and is from the traditions of the central shrine at Shechem. All reflect the interest of pilgrims, like similar topographic traditions, also associated with the traditions of the occupation at the central shrine of Gilgal.

**30. Timnath-serah:** cf. 19.50. The name is the deliberate corruption of Timnath-heres ('The Portion of the Sun') (Jg. 2.9) on the part of an orthodox Hebrew scribe in order to gloss over the pagan implications of the name. Joshua's grave was visited in the time of Eusebius at Thamna (Onomasticon, 70, 20ff.), modern Khirbet Tibneh, c. 12 miles NE. of Lydda (H. W. Hertzberg, *PJB* XXII, 1926, pp. 89ff.).

**32. the bones of Joseph:** cf. Gen. 50.25; Exod. 13.19. This was a well-established tradition localized at Shechem and projected back to Egypt when the drama of the Great Deliverance (*Heilsgeschichte*) became an element in the Covenant-sacrament at the central shrine of the sacral community.

**a hundred pieces of money:** the significance of 'piece of money' (Hebrew *k'sṣṭāh*) is unknown.

**33. Gibeah, the town of Phinehas** is quite unknown. The Egyptian name (*pe-nehesi*, 'the Negro') indicates affinity with Hebrew elements who had come out of Egypt. It is uncertain whether the RSV translation is correct here. M.T. might simply denote 'the hill', but it could also signify a town Gibeah, characterized as 'Gibeah of Phinehas' to differentiate it from, for instance, Gibeah of Saul. RSV follows LXX. Phinehas is attested as a name in the priestly family at Shiloh

Gib'e-ah, the town of Phin'eh's son, which had been given him in the hill country of E'phraim.

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(1 Sam. 1.3) with the custody of the Ark at the central sanctuary; cf. the active role assigned to Phinehas in 22.13.

INTRODUCTION TO  
THE BOOK OF  
JUDGES



## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JUDGES

### 1. TITLE, SCOPE AND PLACE IN THE CANON

Judges (Hebrew *šōp'îm*), the title of the book in the Hebrew Bible and the versions, relates to the scope of the book, the main body of which (3.7-16.31) deals with the struggles of the various elements of Israel in the settlement of Palestine under the leadership of dynamic men of sagacity and authority before the institution of the Monarchy. Not all these heroes are designated 'judges'. Ehud, Barak, and Gideon, for instance, are not so called, while, beyond the Book of Judges, Eli (1 Sam. 4.18) and Samuel (1 Sam. 7.15) are said to have acted as 'judges'. Though certain figures, who are generally termed 'the minor judges', such as Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, of whom no stirring exploit is recorded, were doubtless exponents of law, or arbiters, the book is dominated by the more heroic exploits of such as Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Jephthah, and Gideon, and those are visualized in 2.16, which states 'the Lord raised up judges who saved them out of the power of those who plundered them', a verse which may have suggested the title of the book.

The verb *šāpaṭ*, of which the title is the participle, means more than 'to judge', which is but part of the fundamental meaning, which itself in Hebrew has often an apparently partisan sense 'to vindicate'. The leaders in the Book of Judges then, whether they 'judged' or not, vindicated the cause of Israel, and indeed Othniel (3.9) and Ehud (3.15) are designated 'deliverers'. The Roman historian Livy (xxviii. 37) has drawn attention to the civil authority of the Punic *suffetes*, whom he compared to the Roman consuls, and the Rās Shamra texts (14th century) indicate that 'ruler' is the basic meaning of the Canaanite cognate of Hebrew *šōpēt*, who was thus one who upheld *mišpāt*, or ordered rule.

The scope of Judges then is the period when such order as there was in the sacred polity of Israel was considered in retrospect to have been upheld by the figures of the judges, who seem to be consciously distinguished from the kings in Jg. 18.1, 19.1, 21.25, which contrasts the time of the judges, 'when every man did what was right in his own eyes', when as yet 'there was no king in Israel'. The last verse

in Judges, like the historical introduction (1.1-2.5), emphasizes the local nature of the struggle for occupation and the local significance of the judges.

Though Eli and Samuel are regarded as 'judges' the figure of Samuel is inseparably associated with the Monarchy, and so Hebrew tradition has included his activity in the First Book of Samuel, which deals with the immediate prelude to the establishment of the Monarchy. This is emphasized even more strongly in LXX, which terms 1 and 2 Samuel '1 and 2 Dynasties' (*Basileiai*).

Jewish tradition included Judges in 'the Former Prophets' (Joshua-Kings), that is to say, in the Deuteronomic history (see above, pp. 1ff., 7ff.) from the Occupation of the Promised Land to the end of the Monarchy. The essentially theological character of this study of the operation of the Word of God declared in blessing and curse in Dt. 27ff. in the history of Israel confirms the soundness of the Jewish assessment of the Book of Judges as the second book in 'the Former Prophets'. Like Joshua, it deals with the settlement, but whereas the account of the settlement in chapters 2-12 of Joshua bears the impress of the Occupation of the Promised Land as the theme of the cult, the object of faith, at the central sanctuaries, Shechem, Shiloh, and particularly Gilgal, and is therefore unrealistically schematized, Judges preserves local traditions of the settlement, which, without indeed being literal or annalistic, are much more sober and factual. Both books, however, subserve the purpose of the Deuteronomic philosophy of history. The first is used to emphasize the power and grace of God in the Occupation of the Promised Land and in the Covenant, which was the foundation of the sacral confederacy of all Israel, and to serve notice of the conditional grace of God. The second illustrates God's discipline of his people (2.10-15, 3.1ff., etc.), of which the Deuteronomic conclusion to Joshua (chapter 23) had served due notice.

In spite of the fact that with Eli and Samuel the period of the judges strictly extends to the introduction of the Monarchy (1 Sam. 8ff.), Samuel even in its early chapters is sharply demarcated from Judges. Whereas in Judges local traditions are used generally with great respect, the sources of the First Book of Samuel are quite different in character. Eli, in spite of the statement of 1 Sam. 4.18

that he was a judge, plays no independent part in Samuel. He is introduced in anticipation of the fall of his house; the Ark tradition anticipates David's restoration of the ancient palladium to hallow Jerusalem as the new amphictyonic sanctuary; and the prophetic tradition of Samuel—a source used for the first time in the history of Israel—is drawn upon to emphasize the role of the prophet behind the throne. The selection and treatment of sources of Samuel are ultimately conditioned by interest in the Davidic house, so that, with justice, Jewish tradition makes a division in the Former Prophets between Judges and Samuel.

## 2. CONTENTS

The extant Book of Judges consists of three main sections:

FIRST SECTION. **1.1–3.6.** THE INTRODUCTION TO THE MAIN THEME

SECOND SECTION. **3.7–16.31.** NARRATIVES OF THE JUDGES

THIRD SECTION. APPENDICES:

A. **Chapters 17–18.** THE ORIGIN OF THE PRE-MONARCHIC SHRINE  
OF DAN

B. **Chapters 19–21.** THE BENJAMINITE OUTRAGE



### FIRST SECTION

#### THE INTRODUCTION TO THE MAIN THEME **1.1–3.6**

The Deuteronomic compiler used matter, some of which is already incorporated in Joshua, e.g. Jg. 1.10–15 (the occupation of Hebron and Debir); cf. Jos. 15.13–19. A genuine tradition of the gradual and piecemeal nature of the occupation is drawn upon in Jg. 1.1–2.5 to set the stage for the drama of struggle, apostasy, and deliverance, which is the theme of the main body of the book, the stories of the judges. This is set 'after the death of Joshua', and in so far as the account implies a long process the note is historically accurate, though it is probably introduced by the Deuteronomic compiler in deference to his presentation of Joshua as the divinely commissioned successor of Moses under whom the occupation had been splendidly achieved without qualification, an impression which he seeks to

convey in his introduction to the death of Joshua (Jg. 2.6-9), the gist of which he repeats practically verbatim from Jos. 24.28-31.

2.1-5, the incident of the angel of Yahweh at Bochim by Bethel, probably the aetiological and doctrinal development of a genuine historical tradition (see below, p. 212), is used as preface to the Deuteronomic introduction proper (2.6-3.6) to the vicissitudes of Israel in the period of the judges (3.7-16.31), which is the main theme of the Deuteronomic history in this part of the work. The theology of the compiler and his characteristic phraseology impregnates the passage, emphasizing his theme, the operation of the Word of God in history, the consequences of the infringement of the Covenant conditions appropriated under solemn adjuration (Dt. 27.15-26).

This material belongs to the final stage of the literary composition of the Book of Judges and the combination of the traditions of the major judges with the Joshua tradition, which is effected by the incorporation of the account of the death and burial of Joshua (Jos. 24.29-30) at Jg. 2. 8-9, and of the Mosaic tradition in the preface to the Deuteronomic history from Dt. 27-31 in Jg. 2.11ff.

## SECOND SECTION

### NARRATIVES OF THE JUDGES 3.7-16.31

The judges are twelve in number, reckoning either Deborah or Barak as a judge and omitting Abimelech, whose status in fact depended wholly on his descent from Gideon, and who was in effect not a judge.

Among these are six figures whose charismatic leadership involved them and their followers in significant political incidents which contributed to the progress of the settlement and eventual consolidation of Israel. This is interpreted as divinely granted relief to the people, who by their indifference to their status as the peculiar people of Yahweh had merited the oppression of their various adversaries. Thus the Deuteronomic compiler introduces the exploit of each divinely-inspired leader, enumerating the years of suffering and ending with the statement that 'the land had rest' for so many years, usually a multiple of forty. These are termed the 'great



judges', and include Ehud of Benjamin, the sequel of whose exploit probably involved at least some of the Ephraimite neighbours of his tribe (3.12-30), Deborah, who is associated with Barak from Naphtali (chapters 4-5), with Zebulun and possibly Issachar (4.6 and 10, 5.14-15), Gideon from Manasseh (chapters 6-8, which is followed by the episode of Abimelech's abortive attempt at kingship in chapter 9), Jephthah from Gilead (10.6-12.7), Samson from Dan (chapters 13-16), and Othniel from the Kenizzites south of Hebron, who were affiliated to Judah (3.7-11). Also reckoned as a judge in virtue of a martial exploit is Shamgar ben Anath (probably Shamgar the man of Beth Anath), of whom it was related that he 'killed six hundred of the Philistines with an ox-goad' (3.31).

Of all these local heroes concrete exploits are related, and their obvious political significance for the settlement and consolidation of Israel makes it possible to regard them, in spite of the primarily local nature of their exploits, which seldom involved more than their immediate kinsmen and nearest neighbours, as vindicators ('judges') of Israel, or 'deliverers', an assessment which is related to the ultimate result of their exploit rather than any regular office. Their possession of the divine favour (*b'rākāh*) signalized by their success in arms authenticated their initial impulse to leadership and probably secured them popular esteem and authority during their lifetime, so that the Deuteronomic statement that they 'judged Israel' until their death may well reflect an element of historical fact.

The traditions of those 'judges' vary from the detailed and circumstantial, such as the exploit of Ehud, to the bare statement of a single fact, as in the case of Othniel and Shamgar; from the simple tradition of a single action and its sequel, as again in the case of Ehud, to a complexity of traditions regarding the main action of a 'judge', as in the passages on Deborah and Barak; and include a variety of traditions which have nothing directly to do with that action, as in the case of Gideon, where the traditions of battle against the Midianites and the pursuit of the enemy and those of the establishment of Ophrah as a centre of the cult of Yahweh are complex and probably independent, as is certainly the Abimelech tradition, which is nevertheless a natural sequel to the end of the Gideon tradition. Again the traditions so transmitted vary in character and treatment from the transmission in

saga of matter of obvious political moment, such as the exploits of Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and Othniel, vague as the exploit of the last is, to the hero-legend of Samson, where, whatever the ultimate political significance of his exploits may have been, the focus of attention is rather on the hero than on the significance of his actions.

There is a great variety too in the sources of the traditions and in the media whereby they were conserved and shaped to the form in which they were taken up and worked into the Deuteronomic history. Those of Ehud, Gideon, Jephthah, and Othniel, though they emphasized the role of the hero, were sober historical traditions conserved locally, possibly in saga form, among those who had been involved in the events narrated. The exploits of Samson, and probably also of Shamgar, were the subjects of hero-legend, and in the case of Samson, whose home was near Beth-shemesh (the Shrine of the Sun), may have been influenced by motifs from the mythology of the local shrine, which may or may not have been divorced from their cultic context in the two centuries of Israelite settlement before the Monarchy. In the victory of Barak under the inspiration of Deborah, on the other hand, though the subject of secular saga, the theme of song and story 'at the watering-places' (5.11), the extant poetic version, the famous Song of Deborah (chapter 5), is transmitted in a hymn on the subject of Yahweh's vindication (*šid'kôṭ yḥwh*) of his purpose and his chosen people in the assembly of the sacral community, probably on the occasion of the sacrament of the renewal of the Covenant (cf. Dt. 26-27; Jos. 24), when the recounting of God's grace and power in history, which is the prelude to, and basis of, God's claim on his people in the Covenant (see above, General Introduction, p. 33), is carried forward to current history (A. Weiser, 'Das Deborahlied, eine gattungs- und traditionsgegeschichtliche Studie', *ZAW* N.F. XXX, 1959, pp. 67-97). There are also aetiological traditions, particularly in the Gideon cycle in the origin of the name Jerubbaal (6.25-32) and the establishment of the altar 'the Lord is Peace' (6.19-24) and in the association of the incident of Jephthah's vow with the women's mourning rite (11.37-40).

Within this section (3.7-16.31) directly on the judges there is evidence of an earlier collection of narratives of the great judges,

which is given coherence in a framework which may be discerned at 3.7-11, 3.12-15a and 30, 4.1a, 2a, 3a and 23-24, 5.31c, 6.1-2a, 7-10, 8.28, 33-35, 10.6-16, 11.33b. This framework is recognized by W. Beyerlin ('Gattung und Herkunft des Rahmens im Richterbuch', in *Tradition und Situation*, edited by E. Würthwein and O. Kaiser, 1963, pp. 1-29) as a direct reflection of the liturgy of the divine contention in the public fast and penitence in the context of the sacrament of the Covenant in the assembly of the sacral community (cf. 1 Sam. 7.3-8). Beyerlin goes on to argue that the flexibility of the language in which the liturgical formula is expressed at these points indicates oral tradition rather than literary composition (op. cit., p. 28). This, however, is not conclusive, and indeed it might be argued that oral tradition, so obviously conscious of the original *Sitz im Leben* of the formula, would be more punctilious than a later literary tradition, which would be content to reproduce the theme rather than the stereotyped form of the liturgy. However that may be, the liturgy in question supplied an admirable framework to comprise the local exploits of the great deliverers in a unified theme which had a relevance to the community of all Israel. Here then we have a unified body of tradition and conceivably a literary compilation corresponding to the collection of the traditions of the settlement in Jos. 2-11. As the difference in language and content between the framework and the Deuteronomic introduction in 2.11-19 indicates, the compilation of the traditions of the great deliverers in 3.7-12.6 antedated the Deuteronomic compilation. The judges whose exploits were recorded there were certainly Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Barak, probably reckoned severally, Gideon and Jephthah, a total of six. The Samson cycle (chapters 13-16) does not fall within the framework of this work, nor does the subject-matter agree with the theme of the earlier collection, so that the Samson cycle is a later accretion, probably incorporated by the Deuteronomic compiler at the end of the Monarchy. The incident of Shamgar too is probably a later accretion, introduced as it is in a brief notice of one exploit in one verse (3.31) without introduction. This view is supported by the fact that in the immediate sequel the introduction of the exploit of Barak and Deborah is noted after the death of Ehud (4.1-2), Shamgar being totally ignored. This pre-Deuteronomic compila-

tion, however, within its framework suggested by the liturgy of the divine contention, the public repentance and the ensuing grace of God, agreed with the general theme of the Deuteronomic historian so admirably that he could incorporate it *en bloc* with few modifications except his schematic chronology and the incorporation of the material on Shamgar, Samson, and the lists of the 'minor judges'.

With the 'great judges' in the Deuteronomic compilation, subsuming Barak under the figure of Deborah, the complement of twelve is made up by the inclusion of five figures, Tola of Issachar (10.1-2), Jair from Gilead (10.3-5), Ibzan from Zebulun (12.8-10), Elon from Zebulun (12.11-12), and Abdon from Ephraim (12.13-15). They are associated with no great exploit in any events of external politics. Only their family affinities and consequence are recorded; all are said to have 'judged Israel', and the place of their burial is noted, which is not always so in the case of the 'great judges'. This indicates their significance for others beyond their family or tribe, who would not require to be given those details. They it was who probably had a real national significance. Furthermore, in contrast to the 'great judges', who in the fashion of saga and Deuteronomic stylization secured rest for the land for 'forty years' or multiples of that number, the fact that the length of the office of the 'minor judges' is given as twenty-three years (Tola, 10.2), twenty-two years (Jair, 10.3), seven years (Ibzan, 12.9), ten years (Elon, 12.11), and eight years (Abdon, 12.14), together with the invariable note of their burial place, suggests a basis in fact, a well-preserved list of those judges, and confirms the suspicion that theirs was a regular office. They were in fact accredited expounders of the law and arbiters in tribal and other disputes. Their office was probably exercised at the assembly of the sacral community at the central shrine, when a compendium of the apodictic law was declared and endorsed on the occasion of the sacrament of the Covenant (so Alt, 'Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts', *KS* I, 1953, pp. 322ff.). But they may have fulfilled a similar function at other tribal or regional centres as Samuel is depicted as doing at Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah, and Ramah (1 Sam. 7.16-17) and his sons at Beersheba (1 Sam. 8.1-2).

Now the same statistical detail is given in the case of Jephthah



alone of all the 'great judges' who had performed some outstanding exploit in arms. He is said to have judged Israel six years (12.7). To be sure his grave is not recorded in M.T., but is noted in one of the cities of Gilead (12.7), thus conforming to the general pattern of the notices on the 'minor judges'. The fact that the tradition of Jephthah including his exploit in arms (10.6-12.6) immediately follows the notices of the 'minor judges' Tola and Jair (10.1-5) and immediately precedes the notices of the other 'minor judges' Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon (12.8-15), with whom these notices are closed, is basic to the view of Noth (*Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 2nd ed., 1957, pp. 48-50) that Jephthah was a 'minor judge' with this regular office, and by coincidence was also a 'great judge' or charismatic leader who performed an act of vindication in arms. This coincidence of charisma and office in the case of Jephthah contributed to the view of the charismatics who signalized themselves by a great exploit in the days of the Israelite settlement as national figures. This view was strengthened by the appreciation of the relevance of contemporary history to the deliverance of God as the historical prelude to the Covenant, in the sacramental experience of which Israel renewed her self-consciousness as the people of God. This peculiar relevance of contemporary history is well exemplified in the Song of Deborah.

### THIRD SECTION

APPENDIX A, **Chapters 17-18.** THE ORIGIN OF THE PREMONARCHIC SHRINE OF DAN

APPENDIX B, **Chapters 19-21.** THE BENJAMINITE OUTRAGE  
(see below, pp. 237-243)

## 3. SOURCES AND COMPOSITION

### A INTRODUCTION TO THE MAIN THEME

PREFATORY RECAPITULATION OF THE SETTLEMENT, USING LOCAL HISTORICAL TRADITIONS, 1.1-2.5

In contrast to the Book of Joshua, which represents the occupation of Palestine as a speedy conquest in two main campaigns under the

leadership of Joshua, the Book of Judges presents a much more sober account, emphasizing the local activity of independent communities, sometimes less and sometimes more than a tribe, but never all Israel. Here the role of local leaders is emphasized and the whole makes the impression of sober history, which is corroborated by archaeology, and of genuine local tradition, which was so well known and so well preserved by the descendants of the groups involved as to demand scrupulous respect by any editor. Those traditions of the vicissitudes of the various elements of Israel in their long struggle to settle in Palestine subserve the purpose of the Deuteronomic historian in demonstrating the fatal consequences of tolerance and conformity with the Canaanite way of life, against which such measures as the ritual ordinances of Exod. 34.10-26 in the context of the sacrament of the Covenant provided. Accordingly, before engaging on his main theme in the compilation of the local traditions of the inspired leaders, the 'judges' in 3.7-16.31, the Deuteronomic historian recapitulates on the situation in the settlement of Israel in Palestine, on which the main body of the book (3.7-16.31) is an elaboration. This he does by using genuine old historical traditions on the occupation of the South by Judah and Simeon acting independently, by Caleb, Othniel, and the Kenizzites about Debir (also called Kiriath-sepher), and of the central plateau about Bethel by the Joseph group. This sober tradition of the limited and piecemeal nature of the occupation, however, is transmitted somewhat broadly, in such a way as to leave no doubt that this section is editorial. This is indicated in 1.1-36, which seems to visualize the occupation of the tribal territory of Judah, Simeon, and Joseph as the result of sacred lots or at least the oracle at the central sanctuary, probably Gilgal. The hand of the editor is also apparent in 2.1-5, where the place-name Bochim, possibly in a phase of the occupation where Bethel was the seat of the Ark (2.1; Gen. 35), was a pretext for an aetiological story, which uses the liturgy of the Divine controversy and subsequent fast and public penitence, which is the framework of the main body of the Book of Judges, and agrees so closely with the Deuteronomic theme. This serves the purpose of the Deuteronomic compiler, who characteristically summarizes a situation by means of a solemn speech, which notes the implications of the

situation in anticipation of the next part of his work, which illustrates the principles enunciated in the speech.

The statement that the gradual occupation of Palestine was after the death of Joshua (1.1) is the editor's reconciliation of faith and fact, the former represented in the general impression of the Book of Joshua, which reflects the assertion of the divine bestowal of the Promised Land as the culmination of Israel's Drama of Salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*), despite the known fact that throughout the whole of the pre-Monarchic period the occupation was incomplete. The consciousness of this paradox emerges at various points of the Deuteronomic framework of Joshua-Judges, where various answers are proposed, e.g. that the Canaanites were left as a convenient labour force (1.28, 30, 33), or to test Israel's faith (2.21-22), or to keep Israel in training in war (3.1-2).

#### DEUTERONOMIC INTRODUCTION PROPER 2.6-3.6

As is indicated by the reference to the tribal apportionment and dismissal of the tribes by Joshua (2.6; cf. Jos. 24.28) and the notice of the death and burial of Joshua and his generation in 2.7-9, which agrees practically verbatim, if not in order, with Jos. 24.29-31), this is the direct continuation of the Book of Joshua, apparently from Jos. 24.27, 24.28-31 being written as an appendix to Jos. 24.1-27, which is itself secondary.

The section, which is directly from the Deuteronomic historian, adumbrates the theme of the main body of the work, the story of apostasy, or at least easy tolerance and conformity with the Canaanite way of life, discipline, and salvation by means of the 'great judges'. As in chapter 1, the precarious situation of Israel in Canaan is deliberately divorced from the occupation of the land as the culmination of the *Heilsgeschichte*, which was ideally represented as the conquest under Joshua. As in 1.1, apostasy and reversals of fortune begin after the death of Joshua (2.7-10), the Deuteronomic historian thus conserving his representation of the success of Israel when held to the divine purpose by the hand of Joshua the faithful successor of Moses. Here the essentially theological character of the Deuteronomic history is emphasized, and more particularly the practical paraenetic purpose of that work. We are here forcibly reminded that the

history of Israel to be presented in Judges and the rest of the Deuteronomic history is 'preached history' (H. W. Hertzberg, *Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth* (ATD), 2nd ed., 1959, p. 162). In typical homiletic style, though reflecting the liturgy of the Divine contention and public fast and penitence, which was the framework of the main section of Judges (3.7-13.31), especially in 2.16-23, the Deuteronomic historian repeatedly emphasizes his main theme of the operation of the Word of God in the curse on the infringement of the principles of the Covenant (cf. Dt. 27. 15-26). He insists, moreover, that such progress as Israel was able to make in the settlement was by the grace and forbearance of God, and even if he admits human courage and resource in the survival and growth of Israel he emphasizes the special grace and Divine favour or *charisma* of the leaders as the result of the possession of the spirit of God, which made them executives of God.

## B NARRATIVES OF THE 'GREAT JUDGES' 3.7-16.31

### OTHNIEL 3.7-II

The first instance of deliverance in Judges is exceptional in that it is rather in the nature of a summary with scant detail. The passage, giving the apostasy of Israel (verse 7) as the occasion for oppression (verse 8), their appeal to God and his relief through a 'deliverer' (verse 9), who was invested with 'the spirit of the Lord' as vindicator ('and he judged Israel') into whose hand God delivered the enemy (verse 10), after which 'the land had rest forty years', is probably directly editorial. The last verse is part of the Deuteronomic framework of the book, but the rest is the familiar framework of the fast-liturgy, which is the framework of the earlier collection of narratives of the judges. The details of the historical situation have been lost; but the duration of the oppression of eight years does not suggest a merely conventional figure, and may contain, along with the name of the deliverer and the enemy, the germ of historical truth. Nevertheless as the present text stands the passage has all the appearance of artificiality. Cushan-rishathaim ('Cushan of the Double Iniquity') does not sound historical and it seems quite improbable that a king of Mesopotamia should have oppressed Israel for eight years. Even



granted that he was no more than an Aramaean chief from north Mesopotamia who raided periodically, such raids, if not actually impossible in the light of the far-ranging raids of the late Awda Abū Tai from the region of 'Aqaba to the Euphrates, are unlikely, and it is even more unlikely that Othniel the Kenizzite, whose significance was limited to districts south of Hebron, should have headed resistance to the attack, even granted that it came through Transjordan by way of Jericho. It has therefore been suggested that this is an editorial reconstruction designed to create in Othniel one of the twelve judges of Israel. But it would be odd if Othniel, a Kenizzite of remote Kiriath-sepher, should be selected without being associated with some significant historical incident. In 'Cushan-rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim' (*RSV Mesopotamia*) we may suspect the original reading 'Edom' corrupted by a scribe to 'Aram', 'Naharaim', which particularizes the locality in Mesopotamia, being a later addition. Now in view of the copper-mines in the escarpments of the Arabah, which were worked at this time (B. Rothenberg, 'Ancient Copper Industries in the Western Arabah', *PEQ*, 1962, pp. 5-71) and were probably the inducement to David's conquest of Edom, it is most likely that Edom, already a kingdom, was settled at this time west of the Arabah, and may well have resented the occupation of south Judah by new and aggressive elements. Moreover, the Kenizzites had also an Edomite affinity, and the establishment of Othniel's group in Palestine might have suggested that there was room for further occupation. Certainly the Edomites would be interested in the movements of Kenizzites towards Palestine and in new political alignments that they made. So when the Kenizzite group of Othniel and Caleb made common cause with nascent Israel, the Edomites may have been moved to action. The identity of the enemy with the Edomites suggests a feasible original for the name 'Cushan-rishathaim'. For the last element Klostermann suggested *rô š hat-tēmānî* ('chief of the Temanites'); cf. 'Husham of the land of the Temanites' (Gen. 36.34). Cushan may suggest Kos, the national god of Edom, and be the truncation of a theophoric name. Alternatively Cushan, which is parallel to Midian in Hab. 3.7, may be a district and the original may have been 'Cushan and the Temanites and the king of Edom'. In any case the recognition of

Edom in the passage makes the tradition of Othniel's resistance and the eight-year menace historically probable. Further details were no doubt preserved in local Kenizzite tradition, but by the time the tradition was appropriated for inclusion among the acts of deliverance in the main body of the narratives of the judges, all but the fact of Othniel's successful resistance was lost.

### EHUD 3.12-30

Within the editorial framework (verses 12-15a, 30) the exploit of Ehud of Benjamin and those who followed him from 'the hill country of Ephraim' is described. Here the circumstantial narrative indicates a well-attested local Benjaminite tradition. Moore (*Judges* (ICC), 1908, p. 90) and Burney (*The Book of Judges*, 1930, p. 67) found traces of two versions of the tradition; e.g. in verse 19b Ehud secures his private interview with the king after returning from Gilgal and coming before him among his courtiers, whom the king on Ehud's request dismissed, while in verse 20 Ehud apparently comes directly to the king in his private roof-chamber and announces that he has a message from God. Those statements, however, are not mutually exclusive, as the king after dismissing his retainers may have withdrawn for his private audience with Ehud to the roof-chamber. Ehud's dismissal of his followers (verse 18), apparently at the court, and his return alone from the vicinity of Gilgal (verse 19a), reads somewhat awkwardly, but the immediate dismissal was calculated to allay suspicion, and his visit to Gilgal may have been to communicate his final plan to his followers, who might congregate there without exciting suspicion, since it was an Israelite sanctuary. Thus we find no compelling evidence of variant sources in this brief, though lively and circumstantial, account of Ehud's exploit and the sequel in the successful onslaught of the people from the hill-country of Ephraim, the Benjaminites and the immediate neighbours from Ephraim, which Ehud's bold stroke inspired.

### SHAMGAR 3.31

The exploit of 'Shamgar the son of Anath' has every appearance of a tradition introduced by the Deuteronomic historian into the narratives of the judges to make a round twelve judges. This is indicated by

the fact that the notice is inserted actually before the conclusion of the notice of Ehud's work in the statement of the apostasy on his death (4.1), and stylistically the passage does not agree with the context. Actually in certain mss. of LXX it is grouped with the Samson cycle after 16.31. The call of Shamgar is not noted as in the case of the charismatic liberators, nor is the length of his rule, the place of his burial or his tribal affinities noted as in the case of the 'minor judges'. He is introduced as 'Shamgar the son of Anath', by which is probably meant Shamgar the man of Beth-anath, and there is no note of his district. The name itself, if genuine, is probably not Hebrew, but rather Hurrian, and the person may be one of the non-Semitic elements which the Amarna Tablets attest in Palestine in the 14th century. In the uncertainty of the local affinity of Shamgar it is not easy to determine the capacity in which he acted, but in view of the possibly Hurrian name he may have been a mercenary commandant of Egypt who took part in the resistance to the 'Sea-peoples' including the Philistines, who invaded the coastal plain of Palestine in the first half of the 12th century (so Alt, 'Megiddo im Übergang vom kanaanäischen zum israelitischen Zeitalter', *KS I*, 1953, p. 261). His actual historical role may have been confused in popular tradition with that of Samson, of whose exploit with the jawbone of an ass Shamgar's exploit with the ox-goad is reminiscent, if indeed ox-goad is not a scribal corruption. It may further be noted that Shamgar is not actually called a judge, and the words 'and he too delivered Israel' certainly suggest that the passage is secondary, the figure of Shamgar being probably suggested by the passing reference to Shamgar in the Song of Deborah (5.6).

#### DEBORAH AND BARAK 4 and 5

The exploit of Deborah and Barak in the sequel and the miserable end of Sisera by the hand of Jael is transmitted in prose (chapter 4) and poetry (5.19-30). The latter is a simple tradition, though, being in poetry, it is both more and less full than the prose account. The former is more complex, and is further complicated by the apparent affinity with the tradition of the defeat of Jabin of Hazor in Jos. 11.1-11. Here we must remember that a prose narrative is always more open to secondary additions and adjustments than a poetic

version, which by its very nature demands to be incorporated as it stands. Hence in the reconstruction of the prose account in chapter 4 it is the poetic version in 5.19-30 which is the key to the solution, though, to be sure, poetry raises its own problems of expressions which may be figurative rather than literal.

The discrepancies between the prose version of the exploit of Deborah and Barak and the poetic version are at once apparent. In the former the enemy is Jabin of Hazor in the extant text, who is not mentioned in the Song of Deborah, where the enemy was quite definitely Sisera of Harosheth of the Gentiles (*RSV* Harosheth-hagoyim) at the north-west end of the plain of Esdraelon, or perhaps at the south-east extremity of the plain of Acco. Here Sisera was apparently acting on his own initiative, and is in fact regarded as king (5.28-30), whereas in 4.2 he is said to be simply the officer or Jabin king of Hazor. Thus, whatever common tradition may underlie the prose and the poetic versions of the campaign against Sisera, the two have developed independently.

The source of the complication is the mention of Jabin of Hazor in chapter 4, who according to Jos. 11.1-11 was already defeated by Joshua and his city destroyed. Assuming that the same king really belonged to the tradition of the victory of Deborah and Barak in chapter 4 and to the tradition of the battle by the Waters of Merom in Jos. 11.1-11, Hertzberg proposes that Jos. 11.1-11 and Jg. 4-5 are variant traditions of the same event, a difficult hypothesis since Sisera is not mentioned in Joshua and the location of the action is quite different. Kedesh also, where Sisera was killed in the tent of Jael the wife of Heber, which is associated in Jg. 4.17 with the alliance between Heber and Jabin of Hazor, seems to pose a further problem. Kedesh of Upper Galilee, which this verse seems to visualize, was too remote from the battlefield where Sisera was defeated near Megiddo, and the same applies to Kedesh, the muster-place for the battle against Sisera (Jg. 4.10), which Jg. 4.11 locates in south-east Galilee (cf. Jos. 19.33). Accordingly it is suggested that two traditions known to different sources have been fused here, that of the defeat of Jabin of Hazor (cf. Jos. 11.1-11), where the Kedesh visualized was in Upper Galilee, and the battle against Sisera in the great central plain. It is suggested that the former tradition knew the heroine as the wife



of Heber the Kenite and the latter knew her as Jael, the source of the confusion being the role of an Israelite leader from Naphtali, the tribe of Barak (Jg. 4.6) in both actions (so Moore, Budde, Nowack, Gressmann, Burney, Eissfeldt and Simpson). Noth, who does not subscribe to the documentary hypothesis of these scholars, also sees the source of confusion of the two traditions in the unnamed leader of Naphtali against Jabin in the campaign in Jos. 11.1-11. This is a probable solution of the difficulty, though we should share Noth's reserve with regard to documentary sources before the pre-Deuteronomic compilation in Jos. 2-11 (which accredits the defeat of Jabin of Hazor to Joshua), and we subscribe to the view of Wellhausen and Lagrange that Jael's encampment, where Sisera was killed, was at Tell Abū Qadis, near Megiddo and Taanach, where the battle was (Jg. 5.19), which may be the Kedesh which was reckoned to Issachar in 1 Chr. 6.72 (M.T. 57). On this view the muster may have been at Kedesh in south-east Galilee (Khirbet Qadisha), suggested by the mention of the oak of Za-ananim (Jg. 4.11; cf. Jos. 19.33). The redactional note on the peace between Heber the Kenite and Jabin of Hazor seems to visualize the place of Sisera's death at Kadesh in upper Galilee, an impression encouraged by the role that a leader of Naphtali played both in the action against Jabin in Jos. 11.1-11 and against Sisera in Jg. 4-5, though the scenes of the action and the times are widely different.

In the question of the Israelites who were engaged in the action too there is apparent discrepancy besides essential agreement. It is generally held that whereas the prose version names only Zebulun and Naphtali (verses 6 and 10), the poetic version names Ephraim, Benjamin, and Issachar besides. Here, however, the appreciation of the relevance of chapter 5 to the cultic occasion of the sacrament of the Covenant (Weiser, *op. cit.*) makes it clear that only verses 18-30 are actually relevant to the battle, and here significantly only Zebulun and Naphtali are mentioned in this connection (verse 18). When this is appreciated the outstanding discrepancies between chapters 4 and 5 disappear.

A further discrepancy between chapters 4 and 5 is the figure of Deborah. Both passages agree in regarding her as a charismatic inspiring Barak and the warriors to heroic action in vindication of

God's cause (4.6-10, 14), and apparently also in 5.15, a role which she shared with the 'great judges'. On the other hand 4.4 states that she was a judge or arbiter in Israel, associating her with the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill-country of Ephraim. In the case of the 'great judges' we have seen how the combination of the office of arbiter or lawgiver with the role of charismatic deliverer in the case of Jephthah suggested the characterization of the great charismatic leaders as national figures like the 'minor judges', whose office was strictly juridical. In the case of Deborah the process was probably reversed. Her role as charismatic prophetess (4.4a), inspired and inspiring, suggested the tradition that she held also the office of arbiter (4.4b-5). This passage, however, is a rather obvious parenthesis, or even an editorial expansion, prompted by the recollection of the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel, where tradition knew a sacred oak associated with another Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah (Gen. 35.8), or, as Richter prefers (*op. cit.*, pp. 39-40), the oak of Tabor in the same locality in 1 Sam. 10.3, a possibility considered, but rejected, by Lagarde (*op. cit.*, p. 67). Such conspicuous trees associated with a worthy of the past who has possessed the Divine favour (*b'ērākāh*) are often associated with oracles, decisions, pledges, and oaths among the Arabs, and this may have been the tradition in the case of the sacred tree in question, whether oak or palm, which suggested the secondary tradition that Deborah had also the office of a 'minor judge'. Once this passage is discounted as secondary, further agreement is established between chapter 4 and 5.

Thus in the charismatic leadership of Deborah and Barak, the participation of Zebulun and Naphtali, and particularly in the end of Sisera at the hand of Jael (4.18-22 and 5.24-30), there is striking agreement in the two accounts of the conflict against Sisera. In the matter of presentation, however, the two accounts differ, apart from the obvious difference of presentation in prose and poetry, and discounting Jabin of Hazor and the much wider historical perspective which his inclusion would imply. The fact remains that in its account of the muster at Tabor (4.6, 12, 14) or Kedesh (4.9-10) under Barak at the stimulus of Deborah (a conflation of two different versions), and that of the battle in a locality unspecified but certainly east of

Harosheth of the Gentiles (4.16) and by the Kishon (4.7) and that of the death of Sisera by the hand of Jael, the prose version relates the incident with much fuller historical appreciation, and this is indeed its sole object. The poetic version by contrast is concerned with the incident as the subject of praise to Yahweh for the vindication of his purpose through Israel. This, according to the most feasible view of Weiser (*op. cit.*), was fittingly expressed in a hymn in the assembly of the sacral confederacy when the incident was fresh in the memory. According to this interpretation, the enumeration of the various elements of Israel in 5.14-18 does not relate to the campaign of Deborah and Barak, except perhaps in the case of Issachar and certainly in the case of Zebulun and Naphtali, though the reference to their part in the battle is not the primary purpose for which they were mentioned. This passage is primarily a tribal roll-call, where all present and absent members of the amphictyony were named to preserve the solidarity of the community. The mention of Zebulun and Naphtali suggests the campaign in which they had so lately distinguished themselves, which is now the subject of a hymn of praise (verses 19-30). This and the reference to the part of Zebulun and Naphtali in verse 18 is properly the verse account of the battle and its sequel. The campaign, however, is not described in detail nor set in the wide historical perspective of the prose account. Instead certain details of the battle are highlighted and here in the fashion of poetry details are given which are omitted in the prose account, such as the locality of battle 'at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo' (verse 19), an exceedingly important detail for the understanding of the course of the battle, and the discomfiture of the chariotry in the Kishon, probably in consequence of a rainstorm, when 'the stars . . . fought against Sisera' (verse 20). The details of the death of Sisera are given in detail in both accounts, though the poetic version naturally dramatizes the incident in praise of Jael. Likewise the poem dramatizes the miserable end of Sisera by depicting at length and in graphic detail in the literary convention of the taunt-song, the sanguine yet vain expectancy of his mother and the harem (verses 28-30).

Thus there is sufficient common matter in both versions to indicate a very reliable tradition, the poetic version being the more reliable in the tradition of the actual battle, retaining the freshest

impression of the incident, though for this very reason the prose account presents the campaign in wider perspective.

The poetic version of the battle, significant as that is, is but one element in a liturgical complex relative to the assembly of the tribal confederacy of Israel as the people of Yahweh. This consists of various literary elements. There is the call to praise (verses 2c, 9c), the declaration of devotion in praise (verse 3), to which verse 2ab relates as an indication of the cultic occasion of rededication, to which the sequel was relevant, the renewal of the Covenant at the assembly of the sacral confederacy. The psalm of praise (verses 4-5; cf. Ps. 68.7ff. (M.T. 8ff.)) assures the community of the presence of God, recalling the theophany at the first occasion of the Covenant at Sinai (cf. Ps. 18.7ff. (M.T. 8ff.); 50.2ff.; 68.7ff. (M.T. 8ff.); 77.16ff. (M.T. 17ff.); Dt. 33.2; Mic. 1.3ff.; Nah. 1.3; Hab. 3.3ff.). This is followed by a confession of apostasy, which has occasioned the suffering of Israel (verses 6-8), which is an essential element in the sacrament of the Covenant (cf. Jos. 24.19). The theme of the psalm of praise (verses 19-30) is introduced proleptically in verses 10-11ab, but is followed by the description of the gathering of the various members of the sacral community to the assembly, absent members being named in the muster-roll of the tribes (verses 11c-18). This culminates in the honourable mention of Zebulun and Naphtali (verse 18), as we have seen, which leads naturally to the hymnic celebration of the victory over Sisera as the last of God's acts of vindication (*šid'kôṭ yhwḥ*) (verse 11b). This corresponds to the historical prelude to the Covenant recounting the mercies of God to his people, which was the basis of his claim to their absolute allegiance, the genesis of the sacral community, and the grounds of its hope; cf. Ps. 44, where, however, the Drama of Salvation points a contrast to the disaster experienced. In the psalm of praise in the Song of Deborah the recent victory actualises Yahweh's vindication of his people and his purpose.

The recognition of the relation of the hymnic celebration of Barak's exploit to this particular cultic occasion suggests that other exploits of the 'great judges', of which we have now only the prose version, may also have been the theme of a hymn in such a context. This of course is a pure conjecture, and we should emphasize tribal



saga as the primary source of the traditions of the judges transmitted to us. The public acknowledgement of the exploit of Deborah and Barak, however, in the liturgy of the amphictyonic occasion just described suggests that the relevance of the local exploits of the judges to the rehabilitation of the people of God was appreciated long before the schematic presentation of the book by the Deuteronomist, and motivated the earlier collection of the traditions of the judges under the theme of discipline and divine grace within the framework of the divine contention with his unfaithful people, their repentance, and divine grace.

#### GIDEON (6-8) AND THE INCIDENT OF ABIMELECH (9)

Here, and particularly in the story of Gideon, an exceptional number and variety of sources have been used, tribal and local historical traditions, cultic and topographical aetiological sagas, and of course the hero-saga of Gideon himself. These are skilfully combined to emphasize the theme of apostasy and its consequences, and the overruling power and grace of God in choosing and endowing his agent Gideon and effecting his purpose almost independently of human agency in the crisis. Here the work of the earlier compiler of the traditions of the judges could be simply incorporated into the Deuteronomist's historical work, but the Deuteronomist has made one important contribution, that on the subject of the kingship. The tradition of Gideon's limited kingship is used by the Deuteronomist to emphasize the kingship of God by the reply which he puts into the mouth of Gideon, who is depicted as rejecting the kingship (8.23). The grim interlude of Abimelech's abortive *coup d'état* and Jotham's parable (chapter 9) are given prominence in trenchant criticism of the institution of kingship, which recurs in the Deuteronomist's passages in 1 Sam. 8.6ff., 10.18-19, 12.12.

The components of the Gideon story are as follows:

**6.1, 2a, 6a**, stereotyped introduction to the pre-Deuteronomist narratives of the judges, introducing a new phase of oppression and eventual deliverance.

**2b-5**, historical elaboration of the oppression.

**6b-10**, a prophetic rebuke, emphasizing the reason for the oppression.

This is of the literary type of God's contention with his people at a fast and public lamentation at the assembly of the sacral community, when God upbraids his people for their infringement of his suzerain right to exclusive worship on the basis of his great deliverance; cf. Isa. 1.2-3, 10-20. This, after the introduction in verses 1, 2a, 6a, sounds like a secondary insertion by the Deuteronomic compiler to emphasize the reason for the oppression, but it may well reproduce an older literary form which the pre-Deuteronomic compiler of the narratives of the judges used, though less explicitly, as a framework. In view of this first emergence of the prophet in Israel it is uncertain whether this also was a convention of the Deuteronomist, but even if this is so, the prophet may have reflected the role of a spokesman for God in the older convention of the divine contention. We suggest that, conscious of this convention as the framework of the pre-Deuteronomic collection of the narratives of the judges, the Deuteronomic historian here takes the opportunity to elaborate on it.

**11-24**, deliverance anticipated by the call of Gideon.

One source of the passage is the aetiological saga of the foundation of the altar of 'the Lord is peace' at Ophrah, authenticated as a cult-site by the theophany to Gideon, as suggested by the phrase 'unto this day'. The fact that the holy site so authenticated was apparently on virgin rock indicates an original foundation. It may be the later adaptation of the original legend of the foundation of the Baal-altar of Ophrah. That verses 11-17 and 19-24 represent two distinct traditions is indicated by the fact that in verses 14, 15, 16 Gideon's interlocutor is known and addressed as the angel of God, whereas in verses 19-24 he is known as God only when fire devoured Gideon's food-offering (verses 21-22). It is difficult to tell whether verse 18 belongs to the former passage or the latter. Formally it belongs to verses 11-17, but in content to verses 19-24, and in view of the editorial combination of both traditions it may be assigned to the editor. In any case, verses 19-24 are an aetiological legend of the foundation of the altar of 'God is peace', which possibly derived from the local priesthood of Ophrah; and verses 11-17 are from the hero-saga of Gideon describing his call, which has its immediate sequel and conclusion not in verses 19-24 but in verses 36-40 (the

sign of the dew and the fleece). The unity of verses 11-17 and 36-40 is corroborated by the pattern of the divine call and subsequent confirmation by a sign in the cases of Moses (Exod. 3.10-12, E) and Jeremiah (Jer. 1.5-10), aptly cited by E. Kutsch ('Gideons Berufung und Altarbau, Jdc 6, 11-24', *ThLZ* LXXXI, 1956, cols. 79-80). This belongs with the story of Gideon's victory over the Midianites to the hero-saga of Gideon from the tradition of his clan Abiezer, though in the present form of the tradition the call to deliver 'Israel' indicates that it had already been incorporated in the pre-Deuteronomomic compilation of the narratives of the judges.

25-32, an aetiological legend, either a variant of the establishment of the cult of Yahweh at Ophrah in Gideon's time or, as Gressmann suggested (*SAT I*, 2, 2nd ed., 1922, p. 205), the reflection of a later reformation. The former explanation is the more likely. The tradition, primarily a local cult-tradition, is secondarily adapted to give a popular etymology of the name Jerubbaal. The use of this name (1 Sam. 12.11), with its parody Jerubbesheth (2 Sam. 11.21) in the only references to Gideon in the Old Testament outside Judges, indicates that the story was known to the Deuteronomomic compiler of Samuel. Jerubbaal was thus the honorific title of the hero, perhaps after his victory, as Gressmann suggested, or at least after his decision to strike in response to the divine call. In this case Baal may be the title of Yahweh (cf. Jer. 31.32). There is, however, no inherent difficulty in the explanation of the name as reflecting a revulsion from local Baal-worship as a prelude to the martial exploit of Gideon. This becomes the more likely explanation when we appreciate the significance of the pre-Deuteronomomic collection of the narratives of the judges as deliverances by divine grace after due penitence for apostasy, which is emphasized in the literary framework of this section of Judges. Separated by what precedes and follows by the use of the name Jerubbaal, 8.29 probably closes this incident (so Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, I, 1943, p. 52n.), or perhaps it is from a variant version of the sequel, which has been suppressed in favour of that associated with the hero by his name, Gideon.

6.33-35, 7.1-25, from the hero-saga of Gideon, preserved in the tradition of his clan Abiezer. The power and grace of God are emphasized by the prominence given to the panic of the Midianites

(7.22); cf. the collapse of the walls of Jericho (Jos. 6) and the panic of the Amorites at Gibeon (Jos. 10.10) in the pre-Deuteronomic compilation of the occupation tradition from Gilgal in Joshua. The victory over the Midianites in the great central plain was probably the achievement of Gideon's own clan of Abiezer, as 8.2, probably from an independent Ephraimite tradition, indicates. In this case Gideon's appeal to the neighbouring tribes Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, all of which except Zebulun are mentioned in the pursuit of the defeated Midianites (7.23), while natural in view of the field of the campaign between Gilboa and the hill of Moreh, was probably an alert in view of the rout of the Midianites, like the appeal to Ephraim to man the fords of the Jordan (7.24). The tradition of the selection of Gideon's 300 from 32,000 may be a compromise between the historical tradition of the exploit of Gideon and the men of Abiezer and that of the part played by the other tribes in the sequel. The role of the other tribes alternatively may be suggested by hymnic celebration of this instance of 'God's vindications' at the tribal assembly, like the victory of Deborah and Barak in chapter 5, all members being associated with the exploit of Abiezer. In this case, however, we might expect some echo at least from the hymnic version. On the whole we consider the former explanation the more probable.

In the account of the battle itself the mention of the jars and torches and the trumpets as well as the weapons of Gideon's commandos are generally taken as indicative of two variant sources, though we do not find this compelling evidence. Probably the equipment of *all* with jars and horns (7.16) is a redactional elaboration, but in the two war-cries 'For the Lord and for Gideon' (verse 18) and 'A sword for the Lord and for Gideon' (verse 20) two variant traditions are clearly indicated. These, however, are both of the category of hero-sagas and not different in kind.

8.1-3, the incident of the *contretemps* between Gideon and Ephraim, who claimed that they had been insulted in not being called to action in the beginning of the campaign. This has no obvious reason for its inclusion within the liturgical framework of the pre-Deuteronomic collection of traditions of the judges and less in the Deuteronomic history. It is an accretion to the tradition of



Gideon's exploit, but soundly based in history, and owes its preservation to the famous figurative reply of Gideon, 'Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?' (8.2). This reply, which redounded to the honour of both parties, was preserved in the traditions of both. 8.1-3, however, is probably part of the Ephraimite tradition of the cutting off of the Midianites at the fords of the Jordan, of which 7.24-25 is the version current in Abiezer, probably a genuine historical tradition in all but the names, which are the basis of an aetiological legend explaining the place-names the Rock of Oreb (Raven) and the Winepress of Zeeb (Wolf).

8.4-21, Gideon's raid against the Midianites in Transjordan. This is probably a genuine historical tradition, of which the introduction has probably been lost. Its independence of 7.24-25 is suggested not so much by the names of the chiefs Zebah and Zalmunna as by the fact that the Midianites were apparently undefeated, as is suggested by the confident reply of the men of Penuel and Succoth (8.6). Gideon's motive of personal blood-revenge moreover is different from his pursuit of the Midianites, so completely routed that one could speak of the vintage of Abiezer and the gleanings of Ephraim. These considerations must militate against Hertzberg's view that these are the Ephraimite and Manassite versions of the same raid (op. cit., p. 197). Gressman's view that these were two of many raids with which Gideon was associated (*SAT* I, 2, p. 209) is much more feasible. Hertzberg's suggestion that the incident involving Succoth and Penuel may be a Transjordan tradition has much more to recommend it, and we should emphasize the precise topographical note of the place where Gideon met the youth of Succoth (8.13-14). From the incident itself it is not possible to tell if the tradition is inimical to Gideon, as we might expect after his savage reprisals on the men of Penuel and Succoth (verses 16-17). If the making of the ephod in the sequel, however, is really associated as closely with this tradition as the present collocation suggests in stating that it was made from the spoils of the Midianites (var. 'Ishmaelites', verse 24), both passages, 4-21 and 22-27, may be coloured by Transjordanian tradition.

8.22-27, the tradition of the local kingship of Gideon, and the ephod. The tradition of Gideon's ephod, in view of the Deuteronomical judgment on it in verse 27 despite its associations with Gideon,

one of the accredited vindicators of Israel, is certainly a genuine tradition concerning an accepted element in the cult at Ophrah. The tradition of the offer of the kingship to Gideon and his apparent refusal is less certain. The older critics (Moore, Budde, Nowack, Burney) took the grounds of Gideon's apparent refusal as secondary, reflecting the bitter experience of Monarchy towards the end of the kingdom of north Israel by a prophetic reviser of the northern Israelite tradition of Gideon ('E<sup>2</sup>'), whose sentiments here recall those of Hosea. The antipathy to the Monarchy as an infringement of the theocracy, though certainly in accord with the prophetic view in north Israel and with Deuteronomic theology, which that anticipates, may, however, rather reflect the spirit of the sacral confederacy of Israel, over whom the authority of Yahweh in the Covenant-formula was analogous to that of a suzerain over his vassals, as in Hittite vassal-treaties of the 14th and 13th centuries (see above General Introduction, pp. 33-35). (So M. Buber, *Königtum Gottes*, 3rd ed., 1956, pp. 3ff.; Noth, *History of Israel*, 1958, pp. 92ff.; de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 1961, pp. 92ff.) Again in the same context the contrast may be pointed between the *ad hoc* authority of the charismatic leader, which by possession by the spirit of Yahweh is an extension of the divine authority, and the hereditary Monarchy, where authority passed on automatically independent of the possession of the Spirit of God (Hertzberg, *op. cit.*, p. 199). It is significant that Burney (*op. cit.*, p. 184) is quite firm that in spite of the reflection of the comparatively late theocratic theology, the tradition of the incident was genuine in the old northern sources. Lagrange, on the other hand (*op. cit.*, p. 149), would see in Gideon's apparent refusal in deference to the rule of God an acceptance of the power, though with the rejection of the title. With this we agree and with the view of G. H. Davies (*VT* XIII, 1963, pp. 151-57) that Gideon's refusal, where the emphatic use of the personal pronoun points the contrast with the divine rule, cannot be literally pressed, but, like the instances he cites from Gen. 23 and 2 Sam. 24.21ff. are simply a dialectic convention implying his acceptance, albeit with scruples. We may cite in support of this view of the literary convention of dialectic controversy for the purpose of emphasizing the controversial point the discussion between Baal and the craftsman god in the Baal-myth of Rās Shamra

over the installation of a roof-shutter in the 'house of Baal', which the sequel shows to have been a vital element in a rite of imitative magic, yet Baal for long is obdurate against the proposal for this installation. We should do well to remember that the tradition in Jg. 8.22-23 is not necessarily incorporated in full. Probably we have only the beginning of the transaction, the point of which was too pertinent for the Deuteronomist to be impaired by the eventual modification of Gideon's dialectic refusal.

In view of Gideon's claim to the spoils of the Midianites (8.24), his large harem (verse 30), and the prestige that he was able to bequeath to his sons (9.2), and Abimelech's realization of this as his exclusive right as king (9.6), it seems most likely that Gideon actually yielded to the pressure of his supporters, possibly of Ephraim and Manasseh, as Wellhausen maintained (*Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte*, 1895, p. 43) or even only the men of Manasseh, or even Abiezer and not all Israel (M.T.).

It is interesting to find that Gideon himself is not overtly censured even for his making of the ephod. Israel has rest 'forty years' in his days (8.28), and he dies in a good old age and is buried in an honoured grave (verse 32). This must be out of respect to his status as one of the recognized judges of Israel. The tradition of the making of the ephod (verse 24-27a) may be an aetiological legend explaining the tradition of an ephod in Ophrah, but in conjunction with the kingship of Gideon it could well have a historical basis in his claim to control the oracle of God, with which the ephod was associated (1 Sam. 14.3, 23.6, 9, 30.7). Here we should note particularly David's association with the ephod when a fugitive from Saul.

In any case the incident of the kingship is an opportunity for the Deuteronomic compiler to emphasize his ideal of the theocracy in Israel, though to do so he has to truncate his source. On the literary level the incident is an admirable introduction to the abortive attempt of Abimelech to establish the hereditary Monarchy, which expresses the Deuteronomist's views on this institution. The incident of the ephod is given prominence because of his strong views on cultic innovations and provincial sanctuaries, and is stated to be the occasion of the fatal disorders in the family of Gideon (8.27) in the episode under Abimelech (9.5). If, as the text here suggests, there was

a direct connection between the ephod and the bloody elimination of the family of Gideon in Abimelech's attempt on the kingship, the association between ephod and king as the consultant and interpreter of the governing oracle which we have already suggested seems to be confirmed.

8.30-32, obituary on Gideon (verse 32), preceded by a note on his large family. The note on the family of Gideon, though used in the Deuteronomic history to introduce the Abimelech incident (verse 31, chapter 9), in noting his large harem (verse 30b), may be connected with the tradition of his kingship. The note on his burial-place may associate him with the custodians of the law, the 'minor judges', whose burial places are regularly noted.

#### ABIMELECH 9

Abimelech, though not a judge, is treated in one whole chapter. This was certainly part of the plan of the Deuteronomic compiler, since the following 'minor judges' are introduced with reference to Abimelech (10.1). The subject merited the treatment which the Deuteronomist gives it because of the constitutional issue involved, that of the hereditary kingship, which had already emerged in the Gideon story (8.22ff.). The sordid episode also admirably illustrates the retribution for Gideon's aberration from Deuteronomic standards of orthodoxy in developing Ophrah as a cult-centre with an ephod.

In this chapter Jotham's fable of the trees (verses 8-15) has a peculiar interest. Though the history of Jotham's protest is not seriously to be doubted, the fable, cast in the rhythm almost of regular poetry, has probably an independent origin, though it may well have been cited, possibly in a shorter form, on the given occasion by Jotham, the citation of the full parable in its rhythmic measure being the result of free treatment by the compiler, who knew the original. The literary category of the beast or plant fable, so well known in Greek through Aesop's fables, was already well established in the East in Mesopotamia (E. Ebeling, *JCS* IV, 1950, pp. 215-22), Egypt (Erman-Ranke, *Ägypten*, 1923, pp. 429, 474) and in Aramaic literature (A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, 1923, pp. 216, 224), and was developed also in Hebrew literature; cf. Joash's fable of the cedar and the thistle in 2 Kg. 14.9, the allegory of



the eagle, cedar, and vine in Ezek. 17.3-10, and many passages in Proverbs, where the beasts are personified. Jotham's fable is particularly reminiscent of the altercation between the palm and the tamarisk on their respective merits in the Babylonian Wisdom text cited in W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 1960, pp. 151-67. Jotham's fable is cited fully, possibly elaborated from a short citation of the same fable by the Deuteronomic compiler as an amplification of his own criticism of kingship in Israel, and for the same reason he makes full use of the tradition of the fall of Abimelech (9.23-57).

### JEPHTHAH 10.6-12.7

On the historical tradition of Jephthah, inserted between notices of the 'minor judges' (10.1-5 and 12.8-15), with whom he is associated by a similar notice (12.7), see above, pp. 209f.

The historical traditions connected with Jephthah's exploit against the Ammonites are introduced in the framework of the divine contention (10.11-14) on Israel's apostasy (verse 6) and the public penitence (verses 10, 15, 16). In this introduction (verses 6-16) all the regular elements of this convention are described much more expansively than usual, and in the apostasy that provoked the Divine wrath there is similarly expansive treatment (verse 6) as well as in the enemies who afflicted Israel (verses 8, 11b, 12) both probably the subject of later elaboration.

### 10.17-11.11, the appointment of Jephthah.

The Ammonites take the field and encamp in Gilead, which brings the Israelite inhabitants of the hill-country of Gilead together at Mizpah, which from 11.10 was apparently a sanctuary of Yahweh in Transjordan. The question of a leader which was raised here suggests a consulting of the oracle, the response of which apparently designated Jephthah. This tradition, however, is truncated through the digression on the origin of Jephthah and his present status as a brigand chief (11.1-3). When the story of the Ammonite war is resumed a new introduction is necessary (verse 4), which, instead of being followed by the answer of the oracle or the decision of the assembly at Mizpah, assumes this and describes the call of the elders to Jephthah and Jephthah's reply and his regularization of his call and authority 'before the Lord at Mizpah', that is to say, by a regular pact

attested at the sanctuary. There are two exceptional features here in the narratives of the judges: Jephthah is not yet called by God and invested with the spirit, and the biographical note (11.1-3) and account of his appointment by the elders of Gilead is far fuller than the call of any judge and certainly much more pragmatic. The reason for this exceptional treatment is that this is the account not of the call of a charismatic, but of the appointment of a regular juridical authority, a 'minor judge', like the others with whom Jephthah is associated in the Deuteronomistic Book of Judges (10.1-5 and 12.8-15).

11.12-28, Jephthah's negotiations for a peaceful settlement with the enemy.

This section raises a problem. The crisis has already been described as the occupation by the Ammonites of land bordering Israel on the west of the Biq'a, the fertile upland valley running north from Suweileh, just west of 'Ammān, but the tenor of Jephthah's correspondence relates not to the land of the Ammonites on the upper Jabbok, but to the land of Moab as far south as the Arnon (Wādī Mūjib), which had never been occupied by the Ammonites. It is therefore suggested that the campaigns of Jephthah were directed against both Ammon and Moab, though only that against Ammon is actually recorded. The solution of this difficulty seems rather to lie in the nature of Jephthah's correspondence, which runs through the whole gamut of the narrative of Num. 20-24 (J and E). Here there is an argument of the compiler, probably the Deuteronomistic historian, which bases an appeal to history on the narrative of Num. 20-24 regarding land which was near Moab, but was not specifically described in that narrative of the conquest of the lands of Sihon of Heshbon, where the various localities lay.

11.29-33, Jephthah's campaign.

This passage apparently describes a recruiting march (verse 29a), which may not have been very successful, so that Jephthah makes his desperate vow (verse 30) at the shrine of Yahweh at Mizpah. Here we are in the main tradition of the war under the charismatic leader. Jephthah now has an access of the Spirit of the Lord (verse 29), the onus of victory is God's, and characteristically in this tradition there is no description of the campaign or battle against the Ammonites; 'the Lord gave them into his hand' (verse 32). The sequel of the

critical stroke is, to be sure, very modestly described as a pursuit to Minnith and Abel-keramim (c. 6 or 7 miles WSW. of 'Ammān), and the capture of twenty settlements (verse 33), which archaeological surveys in the region can demonstrate to be but open villages with drystone watchtowers. This fact surely argues conclusively against the theory of a Moabite campaign of Jephthah.

#### II.34-40, Jephthah's vow.

The vow, which is an essential element in the tradition of Jephthah's campaign to accentuate the activity of God, is here associated with an aetiological legend, which explains a rite of mourning by virgins, possibly a rite in the fertility-cult, the mythological prototype of which is the mourning for the dead Baal, the vegetation-god, later called Hadad-Rimmon (Zech. 12.11) and Tammuz (Ezek. 8.14). The rite is here divested of its association with the fertility-cult through its association with an historical incident. The virgin daughter of Jephthah is the connecting link, and while it is impossible to demonstrate the historicity of the tragic incident as it is described here, there is no compelling reason to doubt it either.

#### 12.1-6, Jephthah's controversy with the Ephraimites.

The resentment of the Ephraimites at not being called in against the Ammonites may reflect the influence of the contretemps between Gideon and the Ephraimites (8.1-3), but, though the 42,000 casualties is obvious exaggeration, the matter was much more serious. It may imply resentment on the part of Ephraim of the independent action of the people of Transjordan, who were colonists from Manasseh, and apparently also from Ephraim (verse 4), in appointing a regular judge. This, rather than the response of a charismatic to the call of the moment in a local crisis, must surely underlie the tradition, which is certainly a Transjordan tradition, like most of the Jephthah tradition probably localized at the sanctuary of Mizpah.

#### SAMSON 13-16

Though it is the fullest and most circumstantial tradition-cycle in the Book of Judges, the Samson section stands outside the pre-Deuteronomic collection of the narratives of the judges. Though it is introduced by the statement that Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, for which he gave them into the hand of the Philistines forty

years, this is not set in the context of the divine contention with Israel, public repentance, and divine mercy as in the pre-Deuteronomic collection of the narratives of the judges. Nor does the sequel deal with the single successful exploit of a charismatic liberator, but with a series of exploits from a hero-legend, some ostensibly serious, as Samson's mighty exploit at Ramath-lehi (15.14-17), but usually rather clumsy practical jokes on a heroic scale, all of which are either in the category of hero-legend or aetiological legend, and perhaps even the historification of local nature-mythology. The Deuteronomic compiler knows full well that what he incorporates of this matter is no self-contained narrative of liberation from the enemy, as in the case of the other 'great judges'. In spite of his introductory formula, Samson did not deliver Israel from the Philistine forty years' oppression (13.1) which lasted for twenty years after his death (15.20, 16.31), when the Philistines were very much in the ascendant, and continued so throughout the time of Samuel and Saul until David finally broke their power in the interior and confined them strictly to the coastal plain after his victory at Baal-perazim by Jerusalem. This situation is fully appreciated by the Deuteronomic historian in the tradition of Samson's birth, where it is stated that 'he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines' (13.5). The involvement of Samson, moreover, with Philistine women, the women of Timnah (chapter 14), with its sequel in his revenge for the loss of his wife (15.1-8), with the harlot of Gaza and the sequel in the removal of the gates of Gaza (16.1-3), and with Delilah and its grim sequel in the death of the hero (16.4-31), removes Samson from the category of the great charismatics devoted wholly to the high enterprise of the liberation of the people of God, and successful in the enterprise. The figure of Samson is in fact so unlikely among the judges that it is often taken to have been included by the Deuteronomic historian as a tragic example of the abuse of a high calling. That, however, is rather the reflection of modern homiletics, and is not supported by any Deuteronomic comment in the entirely neutral presentation of the Samson tradition. Those considerations seem to confirm the view that the Samson cycle represents a well-established local tradition in the Shephelah about Bethshemesh.

Combined with the hero-saga is aetiological saga explaining the



sanctity of the rock-altar at Zorah (13.9ff.) and local place-names, Ramath-lehi (15.9-17) and the Partridge ('Caller') Spring in the same vicinity (15.18-20), and possibly a place-name, 'the Gates of Gaza', east of Hebron (16.1-3), possibly at the head of the Wādī el-Afranj, north-west of Hebron, from which the coast near Ashkelon and Gaza is visible. The interest in the Samson-tradition in the region about Beth-shemesh from which the tribe of Dan migrated in the time of the judges (chapter 18) reflects either a tenacious determination to conserve local traditions, which might otherwise have died out with the Danite migration, or else renewed interest in the locality under David and Solomon and the early Monarchy, when Zorah was fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chr. 11.10) and Bethshemesh (probably) by David or Solomon (Y. Aharoni, 'The Date of the Casemate Walls in Judah and Israel and their Purpose', *BASOR* 154, 1959, pp. 35-39; cf. G. E. Wright and F. M. Cross, 'The Boundary Lists of the Kingdom of Judah', *JBL* LXXV, 1956, pp. 215-17).

Apart from local aetiological traditions, the tradition of Samson's birth (chapter 13) is elaborated in the hero-legend as an element in the conservation of primitive Yahwism and the distinctive Israelite way of life (13.7; cf. Amos 2.11-12; cf. 9-10). Samson's relations with Philistine women, however, indicates the complexity of traditions in chapters 13-16.

It is difficult quite to dissociate the Samson-cycle from the cult-legend of the shrine of Beth-shemesh ('the Shrine of the Sun'), 2½ miles SSE. of Zorah, Samson's reputed home. The role of the hero with the sun-name as the upholder of God's order against the enemies of his people is reminiscent of the Sun as the protagonist of Cosmos against Chaos, in the Egyptian myth of the sun-god nightly menaced by Apophis, the serpent of darkness. This theme was also known in the sun-mythology of Canaan and is explicitly expressed in a hymn appended to the Baal-myth of Rās Shamra (C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook*, 62, 42-52; A. Caquot, 'La divinité solaire ougaritique', *Syria*, XXXVI, 1959, pp. 90-101). Samson, who has been in his prime vigour in the summer (chapter 15), ends his days in the darkness (chapter 16), which suggests winter. He grinds, repeating the weary round of daily toil under external compulsion.

It was suggested by Palmer that the end of Samson between the pillars amid the ruins of the Philistine building is a mythologization of the setting sun, but that is not a view which may be well controlled, and for that matter there is no independent evidence of the cult-myth of Bethshemesh.

Features in the Samson cycle which are common to the myth of Heracles have also been noted, e.g. the killing of a lion with the hero's bare hands, betrayal by a woman, and the hero deciding his own death, the descent to the darkness, in the case of Samson blind to the prison, in the case of Heracles to the underworld. Samson's menial labour in the prison has suggested the labours of Heracles at the order of the weaker Eurystheus. The incident of the gates of Gaza has been compared to the setting-up of the pillars of Heracles. The question of motifs of Greek mythology in Palestine resolves itself ultimately into one of date. Older criticism pointed to the assimilation of Heracles to Phoenician Melqart, which is attested in the northern part of the Philistine plain in the 3rd century B.C. But there were much earlier contacts between Palestine and the Aegean, with strong Aegean influence in art and architecture, in Mycenaean settlements at Minet el-Beidā, the maritime quarter of ancient Ugarit, and at Tell Abū Hawām at the mouth of the Kishon. The local association of the myth of Perseus and Andromeda, the Canaanite original of which is extant in an Egyptian version (A. H. Gardiner, 'The Astarte Papyrus', *Studies presented to F. Ll. Griffiths*, 1932, pp. 74-85), with Jaffa may indicate another such settlement in the Late Bronze Age (15th-14th centuries).

Both the Heracles tradition in the Levant and the Samson tradition, however, may have been influenced by the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh epic, as Burney suggested (op. cit., pp. 391ff.). That this was known in Palestine, apart from its probable transmission by the popular story-tellers, like the Arab *rāwī*, is indicated by a fragment of a 14th-century version in Babylonian cuneiform found near Megiddo (A. Goetze and S. Levy, 'A Fragment of the Gilgamesh Epic from Megiddo', *Atiqot*, II, 1959, pp. 121-28). The most notable analogy in the Samson tradition to the Gilgamesh epic is the part played by females; cf. the opposition of Ishtar to Gilgamesh and the taming of the wild man, Enkidu, by the harlot.

Whatever significance there may be in such literary analogies or in the possibility that the Samson tradition retains traces of the solar mythology of Bethshemesh, by which it is located, the tradition has been historicized in its transmission. The introduction is firmly related to the Israelite institution of the Nazirate, and the tradition of the grave 'between Zorah and Eshtaol' persisted.

The essentially local independence of the tradition of Samson, as distinct from the traditions of the other 'great judges', is further indicated by the local, sporadic and often trivial nature of Samson's exploits, which are so often motivated by his personal whims and impulses. Here is no charismatic quickened and directed by the spirit of God to a sober end, but a reckless and irresponsible practical joker, whose physical strength rather than his conduct is taken as evidence of his possession by the spirit of God. In so far as Samson was admitted by the Deuteronomic historian to the number of the 'great judges', he may have been accorded his place in virtue of his exploits, however motivated, which inaugurated, or rather precipitated, the struggle with the Philistines. His case, however, is not so much that of a devoted charismatic consciously co-operating with God as the over-ruling divine exploitation of human ineptitude. In the association of the intercourse of Samson with the Philistine woman of Timnah with his slaughter of the Philistines with the jawbone of an ass (chapters 14-15), and of his affair with Delilah (16.4ff.) with his suicidal slaying of more Philistines in his death than in his life (16.30), we have probably the theological contribution of the Deuteronomic compiler, taking his cue from the conclusion of the Samson saga with his supreme exploit against the Philistines as a blinded captive in the spirit of God.

The mention of the tomb of Samson at Zorah is significant. With the exception of Gideon (8.32), who exercised civil authority in Israel, and Joshua (Jg. 2.9), to whom tradition ascribes the role of legal authority (Jos. 24.25-27), the only judges whose tombs are mentioned are the 'minor judges' or legal authorities, Tola (10.2), Jair (10.5), Jephthah (12.7), Ibzan (12.10), Elon (12.12), and Abdon (12.15). It has been suggested that Samson also was a 'minor judge' of this type, which may be the factual source of the developed tradition of Samson's application of the *lex talionis* to the Philistines of

Timnah, which may be an inversion in legend of the punishment of arson of a neighbour's crops. But this view cannot be consistently carried through in the Samson cycle. On the other hand the grave of one deemed to possess divine favour as the centre of tradition, and indeed of pilgrimage, is well known in Palestine throughout the ages, nor is the defunct necessarily respectable—witness Abū Ghōsh, whose successful brigandage was taken as indication of his possession of the *baraka* (divine favour), his tomb being visited as that of a local patron-spirit (*wēli*) until the end of the British Mandate. It may have been pilgrimage to the tomb of Samson which conserved his memory and promoted the development of his tradition and, above all, occasioned the aetiological traditions of localities in the vicinity.

The last act of the drama of Samson from his intercourse with Delilah to his end at Gaza exhibits the art and stylization of the hero-saga. The tension of his betrayal is sustained by his threefold prevarication, with verbal repetition characteristic of popular saga, until he finally divulges the secret. The phenomenal strength of the hero, which has hitherto been invincible, is now employed on the work of an ass or a menial, even a maid. Rather naïvely representing the return of Samson's strength as the concomitant of the regrowth of his hair, the saga rehabilitates the hero, while at the same time emphasizing the agency of God, who throughout has made possible the spectacular achievements of Samson.

### THIRD SECTION

#### APPENDIX A. THE ORIGIN OF THE PRE-MONARCHIC SHRINE AT DAN, 17-18

This section has a peculiar interest since it transmits, without apparent inhibition, the tradition of an iconic cult at Dan served by a Levitical priesthood which claimed descent from Moses, and survived till 'the captivity of the land' (18.30), by which we should probably understand the incorporation of Galilee as a province in the Assyrian empire under Tiglath-pileser III in 734-732 B.C. (2 Kg. 15.29). This violates Deuteronomic principles so much that it obviously represents a genuine old tradition too well established to be suppressed.



Variations in this section are to be noted. The name of Micah is spelt in the longer form *Mīkāy'hû* in 17.1-4 and in the shorter form elsewhere; 18.30ff. mentions one graven image, which seems to be visualized in 17.4c, while 17.3, 4ab mentions a graven and a molten image, and 18.18 certainly visualizes two distinct images. It has been suggested that the ephod and teraphim (17.5, 18.14, 17ff. and 20) are variants of the image, but they are probably accessories to it. Further, the Levite is variously a youth who happens to be sojourning in Micah's community (17.7) and a man who sets out from Bethlehem to sojourn where he may find employment and, chancing to come to Micah, is engaged as priest (17.8). The status of the Levite as 'father' to Micah (17.10), though it may refer to office rather than his personal status, probably belongs to the latter tradition, while the description of the Levite 'as one of his sons' (17.11) probably belongs to the former. These variations might possibly indicate later elaborations of the original tradition, the molten image being suggested to a glossator by the fact that the silver was handed over to a metal-caster (17.4) (so Kuenen, Lagrange, Gressmann), but probably they represent variant sources (so Budde, Moore, Burney). If we may hazard a conjecture regarding the respective sources of these variant traditions we may suggest that one was from the Levitical priesthood of the tribal cult at Dan, and the other from the non-Levitical priesthood of the royal cult established by Jeroboam I at Dan or Bethel (1 Kg. 12.28-30), with which on the evidence of 18.30 the cult at Dan with its symbols and Levitical priesthood survived till the destruction of Dan, probably in 734 B.C. This cult was perhaps specifically associated with oracles, as the association of ephod and teraphim suggests (cf. 2 Sam. 20.18, LXX). The derivation of a composite tradition from these sources would admirably account at once for the lack of explicit condemnation of the iconic cult, which we should expect from the Deuteronomic historian, and the quiet and subtle mockery of the tribal cult, which Nötscher (*Das Buch der Richter (Echter Bibel, AT I, 1955)*, *ad loc.*) and Noth ('The Background of Judges 17-18', *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, edited by B. W. Anderson and W. Harrelson, 1962, pp. 68-85) have noted. A measure of such literary unity as the section presents was probably given to the compilation by the royal priesthood of Bethel or perhaps of Dan as distinct from

the oracle-priests of the tribal cult of Dan, who were descended from Micah's Levite. This is doubtless the source of the mild ridicule of the origin of the cult-symbols in money stolen and cursed, of the priesthood derived from the vagabond and disloyal Levite, and of the high-handed appropriation of both by the Danites in their occupation of the defenceless settlement. Further the note on the regulative influence of the king in the cult (17.6; cf. 18.1) is more readily explicable in the context of tradition from the priesthood of the royal shrines of Dan or Bethel than from the Deuteronomist, who is not so ready to extol the Monarchy, least of all in religious affairs. The occasion for the literary composition of the traditions of the tribal cult at Dan may have been the destruction of the settlement in Tiglath-pileser's campaigns in 734-732 B.C., when survivors of the priesthood of Dan may have taken refuge at Bethel.

The evaluation of the king, the aspersions on the Levitical priesthood, the absence of positive censure on cultic unorthodoxy, the fact that chapters 17-18, unlike Jg. 1-16, contain no saving act or saviour-figure, and the significant fact that it stands outside the chronological scheme of the Deuteronomic history indicate that it is a redactional appendix. With its mildly ironical, though adequate, criticism of the tribal cult of Dan, it was added to the Deuteronomic history by a later Deuteronomic redactor, but it accorded so aptly with the tenor of the Deuteronomic history that it could be incorporated as it stood without comment, except probably to relate it chronologically to the cult at the central shrine of the tribal confederacy of Israel at Shiloh (18.31). This note is probably introduced to explain the insertion of the incident at this point in the Deuteronomic history, the next phase of which, to be related to a central shrine (1 Sam. 1ff.), is set at Shiloh, of the establishment of which the Deuteronomic history has retained no notice.

#### APPENDIX B. THE BENJAMINITE OUTRAGE, 19-21

The story of the outrage on the Levite's concubine by certain louts of Gibeah, with the consequent war of the rest of the tribes on Benjamin, and the measures whereby Benjamin was subsequently rehabilitated, shows elements both old and new. From the point

where the Levite divides the body of the dead girl into twelve pieces, which he sends throughout Israel (19.29ff.), to the end of the section the narrative is compiled from two sources, with rather obvious additions and adjustments from the post-exilic redactor. Traces of this late compilation are probably to be detected in the unrealistically exaggerated figures (over 25,000 warriors from Benjamin alone and 400,000 from the rest of Israel!) and the ideal unity of Israel, which could be automatically convened by an obscure Levite, though it is twice emphasized that 'every man did what was right in his own eyes' (19.1, 21.25).

A feature of this section which further indicates the hand of the redactor is the adaptation of motifs from other traditions in the Pentateuch and in the Deuteronomic history in Joshua and Judges. Thus the narrative of the outrage at Gibeah (19.22-24) is influenced by the story of Lot in Sodom, particularly in the J narrative in Gen. 19 (the phraseology agreeing too closely to be fortuitous), and the campaign against Gibeah reflects the campaign of Joshua against Ai (Jos. 7.1-6, 8.1-29). The decision by oracle at the central shrine that Judah should take the initiative reflects the tradition in Jg. 1.1, and is certainly not a North Israelite tradition. Here the parallel between the campaign against Gibeah and that of Joshua against Ai might be a case of fusion of motifs in local traditions of Benjamin, but the case of the Levite's concubine indicates a literary borrowing from J in the early Monarchy, while 20.18, which emphasizes the priority of Judah, as in Jg. 1.1, is probably adapted from the Deuteronomic history by the post-exilic redactor, of which further evidence of phraseology and theology will be noted in the Commentary.

This, however, does not exclude elements of a genuinely early tradition, of which there are indubitable traces. In the second half of the 8th century for instance, Hosea retains the memory of sin and corruption in 'the days of Gibeah' (Hos. 9.9), where he remembers a battle (Hos. 10.9), though to be sure his reference is obscure. The role of Mizpah as a central sanctuary (20.1, 3, 21.1, 5, 8) is not so generally attested in the general tradition of the time of the judges that it would naturally occur to a late editor. But it had this significance in the time of the judges (1 Sam. 7.11), though mentioned

in this connection seldom and almost casually. Bethel, if it is a proper name and not a common noun, is found mostly in late redactional additions in chapters 20–21, but the significance of Bethel as the central shrine of the Israelite confederacy is indicated in Jg. 2.1–5, 20.26–28, a tradition which is reflected in Gen. 35.1–5 (E).

The composition of this section from two main sources with evidence of post-exilic redaction may easily be demonstrated, especially in the accounts of the Benjaminite war and the provision of wives for the survivors; and if Burney's discrimination of sources on the criterion of 'the people of Israel' and 'the Benjaminites' on the one hand, and 'the men of Israel' and 'Benjamin' on the other, as a clue to the original sources ('the people' *simpliciter* indicating the redactor), seems somewhat mechanical, it generally results in an intelligible analysis when other criteria of language and theology are applied, particularly in the matter of redactional passages, many of which are obvious glosses and harmonizations (see Commentary, pp. 379f.).

Mizpah at least, and probably also Bethel in the section chapters 19–21, as central sanctuaries indicate a genuine old tradition, doubly attested in versions associated with both shrines, as Hertzberg suggests (*op. cit.*, pp. 250ff.; so also de Vaux, *BJ*, p. 270, *n. a*), though the precise determination of each source is not simple. The preservation of the tradition at Mizpah and, we think, the royal shrine of Bethel would account for doublets and discrepancies in the narrative such as the two accounts of the defeat of Benjamin and the fall of Gibeah (20.1, 3a, 14, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25b, 30–32, 33b, 34a, 35, 36a, 45a, 47a and 20.11, 20, 22, 25a, 29, 33a, 34b, 36b–44, 47b–48), both of which reflect very closely the tradition of the fall of Ai (Jos. 8.14ff.), particularly the latter. The confusion between this tradition and that of the fall of Ai is not likely to have been made so near the site of Ai as Bethel, hence we conclude that the latter is the Mizpah tradition. The former passages, generally characterized by the description of Israel as 'the people of Israel', might then be associated with Bethel. On this working hypothesis a Bethel and a Mizpah tradition may be discerned in the sequel.

There are two accounts of the provision of wives for the depleted tribe of Benjamin, that of the raid on Jabesh-gilead (21.1–12, 14a,



24a) and that of the rape of the maidens of Shiloh (21.16-24b). Of these, the former, which we should tentatively localize at Mizpah, is probably an aetiological tradition explaining the kinship bond which was the basis of the appeal of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead to Saul when menaced by Nahash of Ammon (1 Sam. 11.1-4). The tradition of the rape of the maidens of Shiloh may well be the historicization of rites of sexual licence at a local vintage festival; cf. the incidents at Beth-peor (Num. 25.1-3), and the licence at the New Year festival in the Second Temple, which eventually occasioned the segregation of men and women into two separate courts. The association of the vintage festival with Shiloh, best known as the central shrine of all Israel at the end of the period of the judges, with its unorthodox implications, is an indication of a genuine ancient tradition. Here, however, in the location of Shiloh relative to Bethel (21.19) we may have the indication that this section, like chapters 17-18, was a compilation of the traditions of Benjamin by the priests of the royal shrine of Bethel, as the references to the regular government under the Monarchy in 19.1 and 21.25 imply.

The present position of the incident in Judges is no clue to its historical context. Like the chapters on the cult at Dan (chapters 17-18), it is an appendix to the Deuteronomistic history in the Book of Judges, possibly adapting a tradition of the period of the judges to cast aspersions from the point of view of Judah on Gibeah the home of Saul. From the foregoing discussion the difficulties of source-analysis and dating of the variant traditions will be apparent. The roles of Mizpah and Bethel, however, indicate a genuine origin for at least part of the tradition in the time of the judges. While Mizpah, however, emerges to prominence in the time of Samuel and Saul, probably after the destruction of Shiloh, the significance of Bethel as the central shrine dates much earlier, and is probably connected with the settlement of the Joseph group, who captured the city (Jg. 1.22-25). If, as may well be, there is a connection between this event and the archaeological evidence of the destruction of Bethel almost a century before the main phase of the Hebrew penetration, *c.* 1225 B.C., the date of the incident of Gibeah may be early in the Hebrew settlement, though here we must reckon with anachronism in the tradition as conserved at the royal shrine of Bethel in the Monarchy. Presuming

that Benjamin, traditionally the youngest of the tribes of Israel, was last to effect its final settlement in Palestine, the incident may reflect a time before Benjamin had quite realized solidarity with the confederacy of Israel.

Like chapters 17-18 this section, dealing with internal affairs and not with apostasy, chastisement, salvation, stands apart from the literary and theological plan of the Deuteronomic history, and is a redactional expansion, its position between the Book of Judges and 1 Samuel being indicated by the reference to Shiloh (21.19-23), the scene of events in the next part of the Deuteronomic history in 1 Sam. 1-4. Two genuine old traditions are combined and retouched by the post-exilic Deuteronomic redactor, whose hand is apparent in the description of the tribal assembly in Priestly language as 'the congregation', Hebrew *hā-ʿēdāh* (21.10, 13, 16) and possibly, 'of the Lord' in the note of the vintage festival of Shiloh (21.19) and the description of Shiloh as 'in the land of Canaan' (21.12).

As to the reasons for the post-exilic redactor's appending of the traditions of the affair at Gibeah to the Deuteronomic history, one may simply be because it was one of the traditions well preserved from the traditions of the royal shrine of Bethel, which the notes on the restraining influence of the king at 19.1 and 21.25 indicate. Or it may be that it was regarded as illustrating particularly well the effectiveness of the sacral confederacy of ancient Israel before the establishment of the Monarchy. But the main reason for the inclusion seems to be indicated by the threefold emphasis on the tragedy of there being one element cut off from Israel (21.3, 6, 15) and the provision made for its survival. The principle of sin and retribution is not minimized, but even that does not impair God's constructive purpose for Israel. That was the final word of Deuteronomic theology to the paradox of the justice and grace of God, which was accentuated for Israel in the Exile.

# THE BOOK OF JUDGES

**1** After the death of Joshua the people of Israel inquired of the LORD, 'Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?' <sup>a</sup> The LORD said, 'Judah shall go up; behold, I

## INTRODUCTION TO THE MAIN THEME 1.1-3.6

### EDITORIAL RECAPITULATION OF THE SETTLEMENT 1.1-2.5

**G** The Deuteronomic historian uses local historical traditions of various literary form, particularly of the settlement of the south (1.1-21) and the occupation of Bethel (verses 22-26) and the rest of the country (verses 27-36). The section ends with the adaptation of a local aetiological tradition explaining the name Bochim by Bethel, which may preserve the historical tradition of the Josephite occupation of Bethel (cf. verses 22-26) and the history of the place as the central shrine, but subverts the purpose of the Deuteronomic compiler by introducing the theme of the divine contention with his apostate people, their discipline and penitence which, with the divine mercy and deliverance, was the literary framework of the pre-Deuteronomic collection of the traditions of the judges in the body of the book 3.7-16.31, without the Samson cycle (chapters 13-16) (see General Introduction, pp. 207ff.). The various literary forms used are oracle and divine response in the context of the holy war (1.1-4), local aetiological saga (verses 11-15, see General Introduction, pp. 23f., and p. 140), tribal historical tradition (verses 22-26 and probably verses 5-7), historical summary (verses 27-36), and topographical aetiological tradition (2.1-5).

### A CONSPECTUS OF THE OCCUPATION AND ITS LIMITATIONS 1.1-3.6

This gives fuller details of the incidents of the occupation of Simeon and Judah (verses 1-7, verses 5-7 being possibly an earlier independent tradition of Simeon in the central highlands, see on verse 4, confused with some incident in Judah's clash with Jerusalem), the occupation of Hebron (verse 10), and Othniel's occupation of Debir/Kiriath-sepher (verses 11-15), the penetration, probably of Kenites from the south-east (verse 16; cf. 17), and the occupation of Bethel by the (still undivided) House of Joseph (verses 22-26). The limitations of the settlement of Benjamin (verse 21), Manasseh (verse 27), Ephraim (verse 29), Zebulun (verse 30), Asher (verses 31-32), Naphtali (verse 33), and Dan (verse 34) are noted, agreeing in the case of Manasseh and Ephraim with statements in Jos. 17.11-13 and 16.10, while

verses 21 and 31 agree respectively with Jos. 15.63 (with 'Judah' for 'Benjamin') and 19.24-31, where Acco is significantly omitted. The tradition of the occupation of Hebron and Debir (verses 10-15) is here obviously secondarily related to Judah, being actually a Kenizzite operation (so Jos. 15.13-19; cf. Jos. 14.13-15). Here Jg. 1.11-15 agrees practically verbatim with Jos. 15.15-19. The other matter, however, is not found in Joshua. Here we have independent local historical traditions of considerable value, which were not integrated with the Deuteronomic history in Joshua and Judges in its first draft (see on 2.6), but recognized as belonging to a separate block of tradition, which, emphasizing the incomplete and piecemeal nature of the occupation, supplied a preface to Judges, and was then drawn upon in the qualifying statements on the occupation in Joshua. The statement of the destruction of Jerusalem by Judah (verse 8) cannot refer to the fortification on the south-east hill, but may refer to outlying settlements in the plain of the Rephaim (el-Biq'a) and settlements, and possibly even isolated fortifications, on the south-west hill. The occupation of the Philistine plain, however, is no part of historical tradition, but reflects the extension of the realm of Josiah after the decline of Assyria (c. 621-610 B.C.), which had occupied that region, and is an indication of how freely the Deuteronomic compiler drafted his introductory summary. In view of Simeon's history in the central highlands before their occupation of the Negeb in historical times (Gen. 34, 49.5-7), their occupation of the Negeb with Judah (verse 17) may represent a reflection of later conditions, as the statement of Judah's occupation of the Philistine plain in the immediate sequel (verse 18) suggests. Underlying this passage is the historical tradition of Kenite penetration from the south-east by way of Arad-Hormah-Zephath east of Beersheba, which may nevertheless be associated with an earlier penetration by Judah, described in Num. 21.1-4 (see on 1.17).

**1. After the death of Joshua:** indicates the editorial nature of 1.1-2.5 since 2.6 continues the narrative after Jos. 24.28. The admission of the vicissitudes of the tribes, the subject of Judges, was felt to contradict the theme of Joshua, hence Deuteronomic theology felt it necessary to add that these struggles and limited achievements were after the death of Joshua. The note is more particularly suggested by the mention of the death of Joshua (2.8), repeated in the note of his burial (2.9) from Jos. 24.29-30. In both places the note is editorial, the part of the Deuteronomic history associated with Joshua naturally ending with his death, and the chequered history of Israel in the period of the judges being dated after Joshua's death for theological reasons (so Hertzberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-58).

**inquired of the LORD:** consulted the oracle, visualized at the central sanctuary; cf. 20.18 on the same question of initiative in battle. The sanctuary visualized is either Gilgal after Joshua 2-11 or Shiloh after Joshua 18ff., probably the former after Jos. 14.6. The oracle was visualized as given by the sacred lots, the Urim and the Thummim; cf. the case of Achan (Jos. 7.14).

**go up:** may refer to the contour of the land, Gilgal being c. 600 feet below sea-level, but the term is also a technical one for going to battle (see on Jos. 22.12).



have given the land into his hand.' <sup>3</sup>And Judah said to Simeon his brother, 'Come up with me into the territory allotted to me, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with you into the territory allotted to you.' So Simeon went with him. <sup>4</sup> Then Judah went up and the LORD gave the Canaanites and the Per'izzites into their hand; and they defeated ten thousand of them at Bezek.

**Canaanites:** here the inhabitants of Palestine generally, as in post-exilic usage, see on Jos. 22.11. On the particular significance and development of the term, see on Jos. 3.10.

**2. Judah shall go up . . . behold I have given the land into his hand:** oracular response with divine assurance in the declaratory, or prophetic, perfect. The priority of Judah is an example of the selective hand of the Deuteronomistic editor, who depicts Judah as first after Caleb (Jos. 14.6ff.) to be allocated their land in Joshua's apportionment (Jos. 15), and in operations against Benjamin, Judah also is depicted as taking the initiative according to the oracle at the central shrine (Jg. 20.18). Evidence of the same viewpoint may be the subsuming of the activities of affiliated groups such as Simeon (3), the Kenizzites (10, 11-15; cf. Jos. 15.13-15) and the Kenites (16) under the occupation by Judah. Though the extravagant statement of the occupation of the Philistine plain in verse 18 reflects the time of Josiah nearer the time of the Deuteronomistic compilation, there may be a germ of the truth in Judah's early occupation of the south together with Kenite and Kenizzite elements independent of the northern tribes.

**3. Simeon:** located in historical times in the far south with its local shrine probably at Beersheba, its status relative to Judah, as here, being indicated by the enumeration of its settlements as one of the administrative districts of (the kingdom of) Judah (see on Jos. 15.21-32 and 19.1-9).

**the territory allotted to me:** lit. 'my lot', visualizing the apportionment by lot in Jos. 14.2ff.

**4. Perizzites:** generally listed among the seven peoples of pre-Israelite Palestine, but whether as a genuine ethnic term or an appellative, 'dwellers in open settlements', is uncertain (see on Jos. 3.10).

**Bezek:** the only Bezek known is Khirbet Ibziq on the hill-road between Nāblus and Beisān, where the place was located by Eusebius. This seems not to accord with the southern location of Simeon with Judah and the other incidents described in 1.1-21. But Hertzberg (*JPOS* VI, 1926, pp. 213-21) rightly emphasizes the earlier aggressive activity of Simeon in the vicinity of Shechem before their expulsion to the far south (cf. Gen. 34 and 49.5-7), so that the incident of Adonibezek of Bezek may be a peculiar Simeonite tradition from this early period, which survived their migration to the south and is here erroneously associated with Judah. The mention of Jerusalem (verse 7) may not be original, but suggested either by the confusion

<sup>5</sup> They came upon Ado'ni-be'zek at Bezek, and fought against him, and defeated the Canaanites and the Per'izzites. <sup>6</sup> Ado'ni-be'zek fled; but they pursued him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. <sup>7</sup> And Ado'ni-be'zek said, 'Seventy kings with their thumbs and their great toes cut off used to pick up scraps under my table; as I have done, so God has requited me.' And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

8 And the men of Judah fought against Jerusalem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire. <sup>9</sup> And

of the names and traditions of Adonibezek of Bezek and Adonizedek of Jerusalem, who headed the Amorite alliance against Israel at the battle of Gibeon (Jos. 10.1ff.) and was hanged according to Hebrew tradition by the Cave of Makkedah (Jos. 10.23-27), or by the fact that on the assumption that Judah and Simeon went against Hebron and the south (verse 10) from Gilgal Jerusalem would be a natural obstacle. This secondary and unhistorical mention of Jerusalem and the fate of its assumed king suggests the note on the destruction of Jerusalem in verse 8 (see on verse 8 and Introduction to chapter 1), which as it stands is a direct contradiction of verse 21 and Jos. 15.63.

**6. cut off his thumbs:** a practical disablement for military service, once recorded of the Athenians and prisoners from Aegina.

**and his great toes:** so Hannibal once treated prisoners of war. A further significance of this mutilation may perhaps be inferred from the fact that the right thumb, big toe, and tip of the right ear were the points at which Aaron and his sons were said to be touched with the blood of consecration (Exod. 29.20-21, P). In view of the sacral function of the king in ancient Canaan, now attested in the royal legends of Rās Shamra, this peculiar mutilation may have been designed also to invalidate the consecration of the king.

**7. seventy:** this is an excellent example of the use of the number as the indefinite large number of saga.

**Jerusalem:** see on Jos. 10.1. The mutilation, though not attested elsewhere in the Old Testament, seems to have been common (cf. 2 Kg. 25.7).

**8. set the city on fire:** lit. 'let the city go in fire', or perhaps, if the Hebrew verb *šālah* is cognate with Arabic *salāḥa*, 'to strip, skin' (Moore, op. cit., *ad loc.*), 'stripped the city with fire'. This may be the reflection of some old tradition of Judah of some incident in the occupation of the land of Jerusalem as apart from the actual fortified city on the south-east hill, which is implied in the description of the territory of Judah in Jos. 15.7-9, which included all the cultivable land of Jerusalem (so Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 150).

**9. in the hill country, in the Negeb, and in the Lowland:** the mountains of

afterward the men of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who dwelt in the hill country, in the Negeb, and in the lowland. <sup>10</sup>And Judah went against the Canaanites who dwelt in Hebron (now the name of Hebron was formerly Kir'iath-ar'ba); and they defeated Sheshai and Ahi'man and Talmi.

<sup>11</sup> From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. The name of Debir was formerly Kir'iath-se'pher. <sup>12</sup>And Caleb said, 'He who attacks Kir'iath-se'pher and takes it, I will give him Achsah my daughter as wife.' <sup>13</sup>And Oth'ni-el the son of Kenaz, Caleb's youngest brother, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. <sup>14</sup> When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field; and she alighted from her ass, and Caleb said to her, 'What do you wish?' <sup>15</sup> She said to him, 'Give me a present; since you have set me in the land of the Negeb, give me also springs of water.' And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

<sup>16</sup> And the descendants of the Ken'ite, Moses' father-in-law, went

Judah, which rise to over 3,000 feet just north of Hebron, the semi-arid steppe in the south, and the Judean foothills in the south-west (see on Jos. 10.40).

#### THE KENIZZITE OCCUPATION OF HEBRON AND DEBIR/KIRIATH-SEPHER 10-15

Parallel to Jos. 15.13-19 with certain trifling textual differences, but here subsumed under the exploits of Judah, see on verse 2, and for details, see on Jos. 15.13-19 and introduction to Jos. 14.

#### THE KENITE OCCUPATION OF THE SOUTH-EAST 16-17

Subsumed under the occupation by Judah and Simeon.

**16. the descendants of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law:** probably the name of a Kenite clan has dropped out, hence LXX (Vaticanus, Sinaiticus) reads the name 'Jethro', the father-in-law (Hebrew *hōtēn*) of Moses. In 4.11 Hobab is named as Moses' *hōtēn*, which elsewhere in the Old Testament means 'father-in-law', though the cognate in Arabic denotes both 'father-in-law' and 'brother-in-law', and indeed any of a man's relations through his wife. Another difficulty is the lack of the definite article with 'Kenite', which would indicate in Hebrew idiom the eponymous ancestor, and not a contemporary individual. We might suppose that 'the father-in-law of Moses' was a gloss, but in this case we have to account for the fact that the verbs in the sequence are singular. The simplest solution is to follow LXX (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) and read the definite article. The Kenites were an itinerant smith caste, as the name implies, whose eponymous ancestor was Cain (4.11; Num. 24.22), whose itinerant habits and immunity among the peoples

up with the people of Judah from the city of palms into the wilderness of Judah, which lies in the Negeb near Arad; and they went and settled with the people. <sup>17</sup>And Judah went with Simeon his brother,

are the subject of the well-known aetiological tradition in Gen. 4.9-15. Their occupation of **the wilderness of Judah, which lies in the Negeb near Arad** (Tell 'Arad c. 17 miles SSE. of Hebron) suggests an advance from the Arabah, where they had been associated with copper-mining and working, which is attested east and west of the depression since the middle of the third millennium. They had been associated with the Hebrews since the time of Moses, Exod. 18.12 probably reflecting a covenant between the two groups at Kadesh. Apart from elements of the Kenite faith, which the Hebrews probably adopted and developed, and the Kenites' knowledge of the desert (Num. 10.29-31), their knowledge of metallurgy was of great importance for a people about to settle and fight for their new homes. **the city of palms:** denotes Jericho in Dt. 34.3 and Jg. 3.13 and in 2 Chr. 28.15, and here also in agreement with the advance according to the oracle from the amphictyonic shrine, probably Gilgal (see on verse 1). But this is the view of the Deuteronomic compiler, who probably misunderstood a specifically Kenite tradition of an advance by way of another place Tamar ('Palm'), that 'Tamar (M.T. K<sup>c</sup>rê Tadmor) in the wilderness', i.e. of Judah (1 Kg. 9.18); Ezek. 47.19, 48.28), Thamara, located by Eusebius one day's journey from Mampsis (modern Kurnub) on the way from Elath to Hebron. This is probably the same tradition as in Num. 21.1-3 (J), where the opposition of the king of Arad is broken and his cities put to the ban, one being called Hormah (see on verse 17). Also contributing to the confusion was the association of the penetration from the neighbourhood of Jericho through the Buqei'a towards Bethlehem and Hebron by elements of Judah associated with Achan in the occupation-tradition of Gilgal by Jericho (Jos. 7.16-26).

**the wilderness of Judah, which lies in the Negeb near Arad:** LXX<sup>B</sup> reads 'the desert which was in the south of Judah, which was by the descent of Arad'. This is obviously a conflation of two variants. The M.T. is viable, Negeb usually being further defined, here by Arad.

**17. Hormah:** identified with Arad in Num. 21.1-3, where the name is explained by the ban (Hebrew *hērem*) laid on the place after the victory of Israel. If this passage and Jg. 1.17 reflect the same tradition, as may be, Zephath may be identical with Arad, and indeed the construct form of Zephath suggests that this was a common noun 'watchtower', a variant of Mizpah. Hormah is mentioned again in connection with a defeat of Israel in their attack from the south (Num. 14.45). If the popular etymology of Hormah is correct, this would be an anachronism. But as in Arabic Hormah may denote a cult-place (so A. von Gall, *Altisraelitische Kultstätten*, BZAW III, 1898, p. 37). If the tradition of the victory at Arad-Zephath-Hormah

and they defeated the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah.<sup>18</sup> Judah also took Gaza with its territory, and Ash'kelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory.<sup>19</sup> And the LORD was with Judah, and he took possession of the hill country, but he could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain, because they had chariots of iron.<sup>20</sup> And Hebron was given to Caleb, as Moses had said; and he drove out from it the three sons of Anak.<sup>21</sup> But the people of Benjamin did not

after the attack from the south is genuine, it may refer to the Calebite or Kenizzite occupation of the south as far as Hebron independently or with Judah (so C. Steuernagel, *Die Einwanderung der Israeliten in Kanaan*, 1901, pp. 70ff., and W. Nowack, *Richter (Hand-Kommentar zum AT)*, 1902, p. 7; but cf. Möhlenbrink, 'Josua im Pentateuch', *ZAW*, N.F. XVIII, 1942, pp. 45-46, who regards the penetration by Caleb from the south as independent, the association with Judah being effected in the monarchy). The association of Jg. 1.17 with Num. 21.1-3 is indicated by the advance on Arad 'by way of Atharim' (Num. 21.1), which is possibly a corruption of *t'mārīm* ('palms').

**utterly destroyed:** laid under the ban (*hērem*), involving total destruction as an act of dedication or renunciation in the holy war (see on Jos. 6.17).

#### SUMMARY OF THE OCCUPATION BY THE TRIBES 18-36

##### *Judah 18-20*

**18. Gaza . . . Ashkelon . . . Ekron:** three of the five great baronies in the Philistine plain. If the text is sound, this would indicate an anachronistic note reflecting the incorporation of that region in the realm of Josiah (c. 621-610 B.C.), which is recently attested by a Hebrew ostrakon from the seaward settlement of Ashdod (J. Naveh, 'A Hebrew Letter from the Seventh Century B.C.', *IEJ* X, 1960, pp. 129-39), so also Jos. 15.45-47. But the reading of LXX should be noted 'Judah did not take Gaza . . . Ashkelon . . . Ekron', which would accord with verses 19b, 21, 27, 29-35.

**19. chariots of iron:** see on Jos. 17.16.

**20.** Displaced from before verse 11, where 'Caleb' is displaced by 'Judah' at verse 10.

**21. Benjamin:** note the close association with Judah in the text, indicating the arrangement of the Deuteronomist familiar with the conditions of the Davidic monarchy, when the two were associated. Conditions in the late monarchy are reflected even more faithfully in Jos. 15.63, where the same account of the settlement of Jerusalem is described in the same words, except for 'Judah' instead of 'Benjamin'.



drive out the Jeb'usites who dwelt in Jerusalem; so the Jeb'usites have dwelt with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

22 The house of Joseph also went up against Bethel; and the LORD was with them. <sup>23</sup>And the house of Joseph sent to spy out Bethel. (Now the name of the city was formerly Luz.) <sup>24</sup>And the spies saw a man coming out of the city, and they said to him, 'Pray, show us the way into the city, and we will deal kindly with you.' <sup>25</sup>And he showed them the way into the city; and they smote the city with the edge of the sword, but they let the man and all his family go. <sup>26</sup>And the man went to the land of the Hittites and built a city, and called its name Luz; that is its name to this day.

### *The Occupation of the Central Highlands 22-29*

Remarkably at first sight only one military exploit is recorded in the settlement by the powerful House of Joseph, the capture of Bethel. This is an early exploit before the division of Joseph into Ephraim and Manasseh under the exigencies of the settlement, which are accentuated in verses 27-29. Hence we would associate it with the destruction of Bethel attested by archaeology in the early 13th century B.C. at the latest (Albright, *BASOR* 57, 1935, p. 30; 58, 1935, p. 13). The careful reconnaissance of the approaches (*RSV*, 'the way into') to the city (verse 24) may indicate that the Ai campaign, with its skilful exploitation of the terrain (*Jos.* 8.3ff), is really an account of the fall of Bethel transferred to Ai as an aetiological account of the name Ai ('Ruin'), as indeed the archaeological evidence suggests, Ai being derelict at the time of the decisive phase of the Hebrew occupation. The site may have been occupied by the men of Bethel in their resistance to the invaders. See further, General Introduction, pp. 37f. and Introduction to *Jos.* 7.1-8.29.

23. **Luz:** perhaps cognate with Arabic *lūz* ('almond'), is given as the former name of Bethel (*Gen.* 28.19), but in *Jos.* 16.2 the two names denote separate places. These are probably Burj Beitūn 1½ miles SSE. of modern Beitūn, which may have been the sanctuary (*bēt 'ēl*) of the place, the city at Beitūn being referred to by its former name of Luz.

24. **deal kindly with:** better 'deal loyally with', a conception native to the covenant relationship (see on *Jos.* 2.12).

26. **the land of the Hittites:** probably north Syria, the inland parts of which, as far as south of Kadesh on the Orontes, had been vassal states of the Hittites, whose empire was based on Anatolia. Diplomatic texts from the palace of Rās Shamra document this relationship of the north Syrian states to the Hittites from the middle of the 14th century B.C. to the beginning of the 12th century, and attest that Carchemish was ruled by a viceroy of the Hittite royal family. On the collapse of the Hittite empire those states asserted their independence, absorbing Aramaic

27 Manas'sheh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-she'an and its villages, or Ta'anach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ib'leam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megid'do and its villages; but the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land.<sup>28</sup> When Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labour, but did not utterly drive them out.

29 And E'phraim did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

30 Zeb'ulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, or the inhabitants of Na'halol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became subject to forced labour.

31 Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, or of Achzib, or of Helbah, or of Aphik, or of Rehob;<sup>32</sup> but the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

33 Naph'tali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-she'mesh, or the inhabitants of Beth-anath, but dwelt among the Canaanites,

tribal invaders from the Syrian steppe, but providing the ruling class. Hence in Assyrian records this is termed 'the Hittite land', a term which was extended by the Assyrians to denote the west generally. In view of this wide application of the term, the statement in verse 26 is uncertain, nor may a Northern Luz be identified.

#### *The Limitations of the Hebrew Occupation 27-34*

27. **Manasseh:** cf. Jos. 17.11-13. See *ad loc.*, with notes on locations.

28. **forced labour:** Hebrew *mas*, 'labour-conscription', a characteristic Canaanite institution, now admirably illustrated in administrative texts from the palace of Rās Shamra (see on Jos. 16.10).

29. **Ephraim:** cf. Jos. 16.4-10, with note on the name Ephraim on Jos. 20.7.

30. **Zebulun:** cf. Jos. 19.10-16, where, however, Nahalol (var. Nahalal) is noted as a settlement in Zebulun and one of the Levitical cities (Jos. 21.35), and Kitron is not mentioned at all.

31-32. **Asher:** cf. Jos. 19.24-31, where no such exceptions are made. On the name Asher, with the apparent omission of Acco, see on Jos. 19.24-31 and 19.29. **Acco, Sidon, and Achzib** are on the coast, of vital importance for the Canaanites (Phoenicians) who could provision them by sea, and **Rehob and Aphik** guarded the east of the plain of Acco, confining the Hebrew settlement to the hills of Galilee.

33. **Naphtali:** cf. Jos. 19.32-39, where no exceptions are made (see notes *ad loc.*).

the inhabitants of the land; nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth-she'-mesh and of Beth-anath became subject to forced labour for them.

34 The Amorites pressed the Danites back into the hill country for they did not allow them to come down to the plain; <sup>35</sup> the Amorites persisted in dwelling in Har-heres, in Ai'jalon, and in Sha-al'bim, but the hand of the house of Joseph rested heavily upon them, and they became subject to forced labour. <sup>36</sup> And the border of the Amorites ran from the ascent of Akrab'bim, from Sela and upward.

2 Now the angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, 'I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you into the land which I swore to give to your fathers. I said, "I will

34-35. **Dan:** cf. Jos. 19.40-48, where **Aijalon** and **Shaalbim** (on which see note *ad loc.*) are given as Danite settlements and nothing is said of Amorite oppression which forced the tribe to migrate. The passage in Judges does not mention the northern migration and occupation of Laish. Verse 35 significantly states that it was the House of Joseph which subjected some of the Amorites. The Amorites are specifically associated with the hill-settlements in Num. 13.29, as distinct from the Canaanites, who occupied the more stable urban settlements on the coast and in the plains of Palestine (see on Jos. 3.10).

**Har-heres** ('the Mountain of the Sun') may be either Beth-shemesh or the hills about Timnath-heres, the home of Joshua (see on Jos. 19.50; cf. 24.30; Jg. 2.9).

36. **the border of the Amorites:** read 'Edomites' with LXX (cf. Jos. 15.1ff.). The border from **the ascent of Akrabbim** ('Scorpion Pass') from the Arabah to the steppe south-east of Beersheba certainly supports this reading (see on Jos. 15.3). **Sela:** ('the Rock'). Not the capital of Edom often so-called, but a strategic point south-south-west of the Dead Sea on the way to the Arabah with its copper-beds (2 Kg. 14.7).

#### THE INCIDENT AT BOCHIM (LXX Bethel) 2.1-5

As it stands, this is a self-contained aetiological narrative giving the popular explanation of the place-name Bochim ('Weepers'), possibly 'the Oak of Weeping' near Bethel (Gen. 35.8), but otherwise unknown, hence a feature by the shrine of Bethel associated with ritual mourning. This may have been connected with mourning rites for the dead vegetation-deity, Baal-Hadad; cf. Zech. 12.11; Ezek. 8.14 (Tammuz); cf. the weeping of the goddess Anat for the dead Baal in the Rās Shamra fertility-myth (Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook* 67, VI, 25-31; J. Gray, *The*

never break my covenant with you, <sup>2</sup> and you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall break down their altars." But you have not obeyed my command. What is this you

*Legacy of Canaan*, 2nd ed., 1965, pp. 62ff.), or some other fast-rite, but it is explained as the dismay of the Israelites at the rebuke of Yahweh, a theme suggested by the pattern of God's contention with his people, their penitence, and the subsequent divine grace, which is the framework of the pre-Deuteronomistic collection of the narratives of the 'great judges' (see Introduction, pp. 208, 211). The presence of the angel of Yahweh at Bochim after Gilgal suggests a theophany which authenticates a cult-place, and the Ark may be the angel (cf. Exod. 32.34, 33.14), which would suggest a phase of the history of Bethel as the sanctuary of the sacral confederacy (cf. the role of Bethel in 20.26-27). In view of the address in the sequel, however, it is unlikely that the Ark was denoted. But the *Sitz im Leben* of the divine contention was still the assembly of the sacral community (cf. 1. Sam. 12), at which the Covenant formula and historical prelude were peculiarly at home. (On the significance of Bethel as an amphictyonic sanctuary see Alt, 'Die Wallfahrt von Sichem nach Bethel', *KS I*, 1953, pp. 79-88, à propos of Gen. 35.1-5.) The theme, which was probably originally the explanation of the appropriation of a cult-place, suggested by verse 5b, was adapted by the Deuteronomist as part of his preface on the theme of the Book of Judges in agreement with the literary and theological framework of the body of the book, which we have noted.

**1. the angel** (Hebrew 'emissary') of the LORD: the extension of the divine personality in a human agent, e.g. a prophet. The theophany here indicated was the regular means of the authentication of a cult-site, as notably in the patriarchal narratives. Behind the present passage may be the tradition of the occupation of the settlement and sanctuary of Bethel by the House of Joseph (cf. 1.22-26). In the authentication of the cult-site this may be a variant of the theophany to Jacob, also through the medium of angels, at Bethel in Gen. 28.11ff. With the tradition of the theophany authenticating the cult-site, however, is combined an aetiological tradition of a certain feature by the sanctuary associated with mourning rites. RSV disguises the fact that the M.T. ('and I brought you up') indicates a lacuna.

**Gilgal:** on location and significance as a sanctuary, first common to Reuben and Gad, and perhaps Benjamin, then, after Shechem, Bethel, and Shiloh, the central shrine of all Israel, and the home of two stages of traditions of the occupation, see on Jos. 1.12-18.

**2.** The dangers of assimilation to the amoral nature-cult of the Canaanites and covenant-fellowship with them, which would imply recognition of their gods, is a recurring theme in the Deuteronomistic presentation of history, but here the Deuteronomist was but echoing language and thought of an earlier period, which

have done?' <sup>3</sup> So now I say, I will not drive them out before you; but they shall become adversaries to you, and their gods shall be a snare to you.' <sup>4</sup> When the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the people of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept. <sup>5</sup> And they called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to the LORD.

6 When Joshua dismissed the people, the people of Israel went each to his inheritance to take possession of the land. <sup>7</sup> And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work which the LORD had done for Israel. <sup>8</sup> And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of one hundred and ten years. <sup>9</sup> And they buried him within the bounds of his inheritance in

characterizes the Ritual Code (Exod. 34.10-26, J), with its insistence on the celebration of the three main festivals of the peasants' year at the amphictyonic sanctuary with the artificial relation of these to Israel's experience of the grace and power of Yahweh in the Great Deliverance from Egypt as a deliberate antidote to Canaanite influence where it was strongest.

**3. adversaries:** Hebrew *šārīm*; so RSV after LXX for M.T. '[thorns in your] sides' (Hebrew *šiddīm*), which is influenced by Jos. 23.13, 'thorns in your eyes'. Since 'thorns' is not mentioned in M.T. here the LXX is to be preferred.

**snare:** cf. the same language and context related to the sacrament of the Covenant in Jos. 23.3 and the Ritual Code (Exod. 34.12).

**5. Bochim:** on the locality and aetiological tradition, see introduction to verses 1-5.

#### DIRECTLY DEUTERONOMIC, GENERAL INTRODUCTION PROPER TO JUDGES 2.6-3.6

See Introduction, pp. 212f.

**6. When Joshua dismissed the people:** the abrupt statement in the present context connects directly with the end of the Book of Joshua, the land-apportionment, and particularly Jos. 24.28, thus indicating that Jg. 1.1-2.5 is secondary to the first edition of the Deuteronomistic history.

**7. the elders who outlived Joshua:** lit. 'who prolonged days . . .', a common Deuteronomistic expression (cf. Dt. 4.40, 5.33, etc.).

**who had seen:** cf. the parallel passage in Jos. 24.31, 'had known', i.e. 'had personal experience of' as in '... know the Lord' (verse 10).

**9. within the bounds:** possible, but the Hebrew word *g'ḥāl* may mean also 'territory', allotted to Joshua in Jos. 19.49-50. There it is located at 'Timnath-serah'



Tim'nath-he'res, in the hill country of E'phraim, north of the mountain of Ga'ash.<sup>10</sup> And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them, who did not know the LORD or the work which he had done for Israel.

11 And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Ba'als;<sup>12</sup> and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; they went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who

(Khirbet Tibneh), an orthodox adaptation of the name Timnath-heres ('Portion of the Sun'), where a solar cult was implied (see on Jos. 24.29, 30).

11ff. The assimilation of the Israelites to the life and worship of Canaan was more than a chauvinistic and general objection of the Deuteronomist. It was a natural consequence of the settlement of the nomads to the sedentary life in Palestine with its new social involvements and its agricultural techniques and rituals. In the seasonal migration of nomads to the customary grazing-grounds in the settled land, social ties are made and intermarriage may take place, with agreements and oaths at local shrines. Thus the Israelites may have assimilated the Canaanite version of common Oriental law exemplified in the casuistic laws in the Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20.22-23.33). Prophylactic and homoeopathic rites at seasonal crises were also of vital importance in local agriculture, together with the myths which accompanied them, and the extent to which Israel assimilated these is evidenced by the imagery and ideology of the Kingship of God in the psalms relevant to the New Year festival in the Old Testament, which reflect the theme of the struggle against the powers of Chaos, and the establishment of Order, as in the Baal-myth of Rās Shamra (J. Gray, 'The Kingship of God in the Prophets and Psalms', *VT* XI, 1961, pp. 1-29). The extent and menace of the Canaanite fertility-cult is reflected in the ordinance of the Ritual Code, which insists that the three chief agricultural festivals shall be kept at the central shrine of Yahweh, even though that should involve pilgrimage. The significance of these in the fertility-cult was further counteracted by association with phases in Israel's Drama of Salvation.

11. the Baals: local manifestations of the fertility god, primarily manifest in the thunder and lightning and rain of late autumn and secondarily as the dying and rising god identified with the vegetation he stimulated. His proper name was Hadad, Baal being his title, as is known from the Rās Shamra myth, which relates the perpetual struggle of the god for kingship, which guarantees order in nature against the menace of Chaos, which is identified with the turbulent waters, and against drought and sterility.

12. The amoral nature-cult of Canaan is here set in sharp contrast to the historical faith of Israel (see on verses 11, 13ff.).

were round about them, and bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. <sup>13</sup> They forsook the LORD, and served the Ba'als and the Ash'taroth. <sup>14</sup> So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them; and he sold them into the power of their enemies round about, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. <sup>15</sup> Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had warned, and as the LORD had sworn to them; and they were in sore straits.

<sup>16</sup> Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the power of those who plundered them. <sup>17</sup> And yet they did not listen to their judges; for they played the harlot after other gods and

**13. the Ashtaroth:** local manifestations of the fertility goddess Astarte, known from the Rās Shamra texts and from late Phoenician inscriptions. She is not so prominent in the extant texts from Rās Shamra as the goddess Anat, the sister of Baal and the goddess of love and war, but the two were closely associated, and while Astarte is less prominent than Anat in the Rās Shamra texts, the situation is reversed in the Old Testament.

**14. could no longer withstand their enemies:** apart from the possibly enervating influence of the Canaanite nature-cult, the alleged excesses of which, incidentally, are not attested in the Rās Shamra texts, the assimilation to the Canaanites and their cult was a disintegrating force in Israel if substituted for the cult at the central shrine of the sacral confederacy, which preserved the solidarity of Israel in the sacramental experience of the Drama of Salvation and the social discipline of the Covenant and law.

**15. marched out:** so RSV rightly for 'went out', a technical term (cf. Dt. 28.7; 2 Sam. 11.1; Jg. 11.3, etc.).

**as the LORD had sworn:** the reference is to the admonitory address which followed the final adjurations in the Covenant ceremony, exemplified in the Twelve Adjurations of Dt. 27.15-26 with the following elaboration.

**16. judges:** see Introduction, pp. 202ff.

**16-19.** Verses 16 and 18-19 state that after the striking salvation by the hand of the 'judge', Israel remained faithful till after his death. Hence verse 17, in asserting apostasy even in the lifetime of the judges, is probably secondary, from the redactor rather than the Deuteronomic compiler, having been prompted as an afterthought, possibly by the recollection of the ephod of Gideon (8.27), which was regarded as idolatrous.

**17. played the harlot:** possibly a reference to the harlot (Hebrew 'strange

bowed down to them; they soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the LORD, and they did not do so.<sup>18</sup> Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them.<sup>19</sup> But whenever the judge died, they turned back and behaved worse than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them; they did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways.<sup>20</sup> So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel; and he said, 'Because this people have transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not obeyed my voice,<sup>21</sup> I will not henceforth drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died,<sup>22</sup> that by them I may test Israel, whether they will take care to walk in the

woman', Prov. 2.16, 5.3, 20, etc.) who was open to those beyond the pale of the society, or to the element of ritual prostitution as a rite of imitative magic in the Canaanite fertility-cult.

**18. was moved to pity:** 'relented', the reflexive of the same verb as is used in the active (intensive with causative sense) in Isa. 40.1, 'Comfort ye . . . my people'. **oppressed:** lit. 'thrust, jostled'.

**20. my covenant:** note the emphasis on the conditional grace of God expressed in the context of the Covenant in 2.1-5 and Jos. 23-24, the major theme of the Deuteronomist, developed from the liturgy of the sacrament of the Covenant (cf. Dt. 27ff.). The possessive pronoun puts the Covenant into the category of the vassal-treaties known from Hittite prototypes, where the suzerain gives his treaty with its conditions and guarantees as a favour (see General Introduction to Joshua, pp. 33ff.).

**22. that by them I may test Israel:** here the Deuteronomist expresses Israel's consciousness of the paradox between faith in the triumphant climax to the Drama of Salvation in the occupation of the Promised Land, Israel's historical Credo (cf. Dt. 26.5ff.), and the realistic fact of her political limitations, and offers one solution in suggesting that the opposition was maintained as a challenge to Israel's faith. Other explanations, which reflect the same theological embarrassment, are that the land would otherwise have been overrun by wild beasts (Exod. 23. 29ff.; Dt. 7.22), and that the Canaanites were left so that Israel might be trained in war (3.2). The various answers reflect the measure of theological embarrassment.

way of the LORD as their fathers did, or not.' <sup>23</sup> So the LORD left those nations, not driving them out at once, and he did not give them into the power of Joshua.

**3** Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to test Israel by them, that is, all in Israel who had no experience of any war in Canaan; <sup>3</sup> it was only that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, that he might teach war to such at least as had not known it before. <sup>3</sup> These are the nations: the five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sido'nians, and the Hivites who dwelt on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Ba'al-her'mon as far as the entrance of Hamath. <sup>4</sup> They were for the testing of Israel, to

**23. and he did not give them into the power of Joshua:** the Deuteronomic historian indicates that in spite of his rendering of the theme of the occupation of the Promised Land in Joshua, he was aware of other more sober historical sources, such as those in Judges and in the prefatory appendix in 1.1-2.5.

*The Unconquered Peoples and Israel's Relation to them 3.1-6*

**1. to test Israel . . . all in Israel who had no experience of any war in Canaan** (see on 2.22). A realistic historical answer to the problem of the resistance of the Canaanites is given in chapter 1 that Israel could make no headway against the Canaanites in their fortifications and in the plains where they could deploy their chariots.

**3. the five lords of the Philistines:** see on Jos. 13.2 and 3.

**Canaanites:** the association with the Sidonians indicates that 'Canaanites' may be used in the narrower sense, as in Num. 13.29, where they are located by the sea and in the plains, that is to say in regions open to the influence of Canaan proper, the Phoenician coast. See further, on Jos. 3.10.

**Sidonians:** probably denotes the Phoenicians of the coastal strip from Acco northwards (cf. Jos. 13.4), who limited the settlement of Asher (1.31-32).

**Hivites:** probably non-Semites from the north (cf. Jos. 11.3). Often, though not here, LXX reads *Chorraioi* (Hurrians) for 'Hivites' (see on Jos. 3.10).

**Lebanon:** generally agrees with Jos. 13.5, which locates the 'Hivites' under Mount Hermon, the southern culmination of the Antilebanon range.

**Mount Baal-Hermon:** cf., in a similar context, 'Baal-gad below Mount Hermon' in Jos. 13.5 and 11.17, on which see.

**the entrance of Hamath:** 'the Hamath-approaches', probably reflecting the actual limit of David's sphere of influence (see on Jos. 13.5).

know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by Moses. <sup>5</sup> So the people of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites; <sup>6</sup> and they took their daughters to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons; and they served their gods.

7 And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, forgetting the LORD their God, and serving the Ba'als and the Ashe'roth. <sup>8</sup> Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cu'shan-rishatha'im king of

5-6. On the conventional list of inhabitants of pre-Israelite Palestine, here omitting Girgashites (see on Jos. 3.10).

### NARRATIVES OF THE JUDGES 3.7-16.31

#### OTHNIEL AS DELIVERER 3.7-11

A historical tradition of the Kenizzites adapted by the pre-Deuteronomic collector of the narratives of the 'great judges', presented in the framework of God's contention against his apostate people, their repentance, appeal in extremity, and the divine mercy particularized in the judge. The details of the tradition have been lost, so that only the fact of the deliverance by Othniel from an Edomite menace has survived (see further, Introduction, pp. 213-215).

The characteristic details of the framework are here incomplete, suggesting that the tradition was adapted from a fuller Kenizzite tradition to complete the quota of 'judges of Israel', or even freely composed from such a tradition by the Deuteronomic compiler on the model of the pre-Deuteronomic collection.

#### *Introductory Formula 7-8a*

7. **Baals:** see on 2.11.

**Asheroth:** probably local manifestations of the fertility goddess Asherah, now known from the Rās Shamra myths as the consort of the senior god El and the mother of the divine family. She was often represented as the tree of life, which is often depicted in Canaanite art as being flanked by caprids, who reach up to its fruit. A variant of this motif is the fertility goddess who offers ears of corn to two rampant caprids in the celebrated ivory unguent box from Minet el-Beidā by Rās Shamra (C. F. A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica*, I, 1939, Pl. I). The tree of life is stylized in Canaanite art, and in the fertility-cult in Canaan was represented either by a natural tree, which was planted, or even by a stylized tree or wooden pole, the 'āšērāh.

8. **Cushan-rishathaim:** 'Cushan of the Double Evil', a scribal parody, possibly



Mesopota'mia; and the people of Israel served Cu'shan-rishatha'im eight years. <sup>9</sup> But when the people of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who delivered them, Oth'ni-el the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. <sup>10</sup> The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel; he went out to war, and the LORD gave Cu'shan-rishatha'im king of Mesopota'mia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cu'shan-rishatha'im. <sup>11</sup> So the land had rest forty years. Then Oth'ni-el the son of Kenaz died.

originally Cushan the chief of the Temanites (*kūšan rō's hat-tēmānī*) (so Klostermann) or Cushan and the Temanites (*kūšan w'hat-tēmānī*) (see Introduction to Judges, p. 214).

**Mesopotamia:** Hebrew *'a ram nah' rāyim*. On our reading *'ē dōm* (Edom) corrupted to *'a ram*, which was then qualified by *nah' rāyim*, denoting Upper Mesopotamia, taken in conjunction with the proposed originals of the name, and the historical probability of Edomite pressure on the Kenizzites of south Palestine on their alignment with an aggressive tribal confederacy of Israel, see Introduction to Judges, pp. 214f.

**9. deliverer:** lit. 'one who makes room', according to the Arabic cognate. The meaning of the verb develops from the physical sense (e.g. 1 Sam. 14.45) to the spiritual sense, which has still the connotation of freedom from limitations. Here the physical connotation prevails.

**Othni-el:** note that he is a Kenizzite. The Kenizzites in south Palestine were also affiliated with the Edomites (Gen. 36.10-11, 42; cf. 1 Chr. 1.35-36), hence the resentment of Edom at their present alignment. On Othniel and his association with Caleb, see further, on Jos. 15.13-19 and introduction to Jos. 14.

**10. The Spirit of the LORD came upon him:** this expresses in the Old Testament the invasive influence which transforms a man either for good or ill, either in physical or spiritual potential, e.g. as poet, sage, prophet, artist, craftsman, warrior or leader. Saul's madness was caused by the withdrawal of the Lord's spirit and the invasive influence of an evil spirit (1 Sam. 16.14). Thus is explained the physical strength of Samson (14.6, 19, 15.14), and as here and in the story of Gideon (6.34) and Jephthah (11.29), the resolution and courage to commit oneself in a hazardous venture.

**judged:** (Hebrew *šāpat*), maintained the order (*mišpāt*), i.e. of God for his people against the menace of dissolution, hence 'vindicated'. EV suggests a regular office, which certain of the judges did actually exercise, but it is improbable that such an office was held by the Kenizzite Othniel.

**11. forty years:** part of the Deuteronomic chronological framework (see General Introduction, pp. 2ff.). As distinct from the conventional general

12 And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of the LORD. 13 He gathered to himself the Ammonites and the Amal'ekites, and went and defeated Israel; and they took possession of the city of palms. 14 And the people of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

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number forty, the eight years of the oppression has the ring of a realistic tradition, unless it is the conventional 'seven years, yea eight' which occurs in the Rās Shamra myths.

#### EHUD AS DELIVERER 12-30

A local Benjaminite hero-saga. For historical reconstruction and source-analysis, see Introduction, p. 215.

12. **Eglon**: otherwise unknown.

**Moab**: the surface explorations of Nelson Glueck in Transjordan have demonstrated the consolidation of territorial states there demarcated by frontier fortresses at strategic points over the deep ravines of the Wādī el-Ḥesā (the Brook Zered) and the Wādī Mūjib (Brook Arnon) and on heights towards the desert of the east ('Explorations in Eastern Palestine' I-IV, *AASOR* XIV, 1934, pp. 1-113; XV, 1935 pp. 1-202; XVIII-XIX, 1939, pp. 1-288; XXV-XXVII, 1951, pp. 1-711). Moab had been deprived of the land north of the Arnon by the Amorites (Num. 21.26), which was occupied by the Hebrew elements Reuben and Gad after their defeat of Sihon of Heshbon. This was apparently the beginning of a Moabite revival (Num. 21-23) which resulted in their eventual occupation of Jericho 'the city of palms' (verse 13; cf. 1.16, see note), which was the administrative centre where tribute was collected from the people west of Jordan. The land north of the Arnon was always disputed territory between Israel and Moab, who were always ready to recover it as the inscription of King Mesha indicates, and were ever ready to raid west of Jordan (2 Kg. 13.20).

13. **Ammonites**: lit. 'the sons of Ammon', always designated by the tribal title in the Old Testament, even after they had a king. They were the northern neighbours of Moab, their name surviving in 'Ammān. They kept their tribal constitution, which is reflected by the fact that except at 'Ammān archaeology attests no fortified city of the Ammonites, but only open villages with fortified watchtowers.

**the Amalekites**: usually located in north Sinai, being bitterly hostile to Israel. The term may be applied loosely here to hostile Bedouin either from east of Jordan or from the desert west of the Dead Sea, who might have been the more easily

15 But when the people of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The people of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab. <sup>16</sup>And Ehud made for himself a sword with two edges, a cubit in length; and he girded it on his right thigh under his clothes. <sup>17</sup>And he presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man. <sup>18</sup>And when Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people that carried the tribute. <sup>19</sup> But he himself turned back at the sculptured stones near Gilgal, and said, 'I have a secret message for you, O king.' And he

enlisted against Israel since their seasonal grazing rights in Palestine had been lost with the Hebrew occupation.

**city of palms:** Jericho (see on verse 12 and 1.16).

**15. Ehud . . . Gera:** the occurrence of Ehud in 1 Chr. 7.10 and of Gera in 1 Chr. 8.3 and Gen. 46.21 and 2 Sam. 16.5 as clan names suggests that this may be the personification in saga of clan history. Gera was probably the clan of Ehud, but, as the clan Ehud was probably named after an individual ancestor, there is no objection to an individual being named after the eponymous ancestor. The details of the tradition are too circumstantial not to relate to an individual exploit.

**a left-handed man:** lit. 'restricted in his right hand', also the description of the left-handed slingers of Benjamin in 20.16, but for which the phrase might have been taken as describing a bodily defect, which would have helped the assassin to avoid suspicion. The meaning, however, is simply 'left-handed', which would in itself deceive the guards, who would naturally look for a weapon on the left side. Ehud would thus also surprise his victim. The phrase 'restricted in his right hand' might refer to the training of boys for left-handed fighting, which was the more effective since the shield was normally carried on the left arm. A clan of Scottish Borderers, the Kerrs, had this tradition.

**tribute:** (Hebrew *minhāh*). Elsewhere meaning 'present' or 'offering, sacrifice', but also 'tribute', as in 2 Sam. 8.2, and in administrative texts from the palace of Rās Shamra. Agricultural produce is no doubt denoted, as the reference to bearers indicates (verse 18).

**16. a cubit:** Hebrew *gōmed* is unique here in the Old Testament, and is explained in the Talmud as the length of the forearm (the standard cubit) minus the fingers.

**19. sculptured stones:** (RV margin 'graven images'). Perhaps inscribed stones recording the dominion of Moab and the terms imposed on Israel, and perhaps carved with a divine figure guaranteeing the validity of the vassal-treaty, as in the Assyrian vassal-treaties at Sūjin. The location of those at Gilgal has suggested that they were the standing-stones of that sanctuary (see on Jos. 4.19), but we think it

commanded, 'Silence.' And all his attendants went out from his presence.<sup>20</sup> And Ehud came to him, as he was sitting alone in his cool roof chamber. And Ehud said, 'I have a message from God for you.' And he arose from his seat.<sup>21</sup> And Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly;<sup>22</sup> and the hilt also went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the sword out of his belly; and the dirt came out.<sup>23</sup> Then Ehud went out into the vestibule, and closed the doors of the roof chamber upon him, and locked them.

more likely that they were the stones recording a vassal-treaty, erected by Gilgal, where the Israelites for their part swore by their God.

**a secret message:** the public announcement has been contrasted with Ehud's coming to the king in private on the pretext of a message from God (verse 20), and taken as evidence of variant traditions, but, we think, on insufficient grounds (see Introduction, p. 215).

**20. cool roof chamber: on the flat roof,** such as is still used for lodging a guest (cf. 1 Kg. 17.19; 2 Kg. 4.10), or for parties. The place was well adapted for the secret business that Ehud alleged (cf. the business of Samuel and Saul on the rooftop, 1 Sam. 9.25). These are usually simple shelters, but this one was more elaborate, having folding doors that bolted (verse 23), and apparently a separate chamber that served as a lavatory (verse 24), through which Ehud may have escaped (verse 23).

**arose from his seat:** Eglon's rising on the announcement of a message from God may have been in deference to the mention of God, as Rabbinic commentators suggest. He may have expected an oracle (Nötscher, op. cit., p. 16). This probably gave Ehud his chance for his sudden fatal thrust.

**22. the blade:** Hebrew *lahab*, which means 'flame', possibly referring to the gleam.

**and the dirt came out:** reading *wayyēšē' hap-pereš* (so Moore, Budde, Gressmann) for M.T. *wayyēšē' hap-parš' dōnāh*, the last word of which is unattested in the Old Testament. The phrase is omitted in LXX, which might suggest that it is the corruption of a gloss on the next phrase noting the way of Ehud's exit. Thus it might indicate an original gloss *ša'ar hap-pinnāh* ('the door in the corner'), as suggested in Kittel's critical apparatus. The difficulty here is that *ša'ar* would hardly apply to the door of a comparatively flimsy roof-chamber. Koehler-Baumgartner (*Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, p. 783) suggests that *parš' dōnāh* is cognate with Akkadian *parašdinu* ('hole'), thinking of an architectural feature. G. R. Driver, cited in C. A. Simpson (*Composition of the Book of Judges*, 1957, p. 11) takes it to refer to the anus, the subject of the verb being 'the blade'.

24 When he had gone, the servants came; and when they saw that the doors of the roof chamber were locked, they thought, 'He is only relieving himself in the closet of the cool chamber.' <sup>25</sup> And they waited till they were utterly at a loss; but when he still did not open the doors of the roof chamber, they took the key and opened them; and there lay their lord dead on the floor.

26 Ehud escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the sculptured stones and escaped to Se-i'rah. <sup>27</sup> When he arrived, he sounded the trumpet in the hill country of E'phraim; and the people of Israel went down with him from the hill country, having him at

**23. the vestibule:** Hebrew *ham-misd'rônāh* (final *h* local), otherwise unattested, 'vestibule' being suggested by LXX. The ending is probably locative, suggesting a feature outside the cool upper chamber as the place to which Ehud went out. The root of the word *sdr* suggests 'order, row, or gradation', so a portico, or, more probably in our opinion, an outside stairway may be indicated.

**and locked them:** the Hebrew conjunction with the perfect of the verb indicates a late interpolation, but in the earlier unvocalized Hebrew text the verb may have been an infinitive absolute.

**24. relieving himself:** lit. 'covering his feet', a well-known euphemism (cf. 1 Sam. 24.3).

**25. till they were utterly at a loss:** Hebrew '*ad bōš*'. The verb is probably akin to Arabic *bāṭa* ('to scatter'), hence 'till their wits were scattered'. Alternatively, with the more regular meaning of *bōš* in Hebrew, 'as long as shame demanded'. The verb (M.T. *wayyāḥīlū*, lit. 'and they writhed') is almost certainly a corruption of *wayyōḥīlū* or *way'yah'īlū*, 'and they waited'.

**26. escaped:** the root of the verb is the same as in Malta, a refuge in the days of Phoenician coasting navigation in the dangerous long hop between Crete, Sicily, and North Africa. The escape of Ehud, presumably to his own hills of Benjamin, by way of Gilgal, was taken by the older commentators as evidence that his exploit was east of Jordan because they accepted the traditional ecclesiastical location of Gilgal south-east of Jericho. But with the location of Gilgal north-north-east of Jericho the scene of the exploit is certainly Jericho, which is specifically noted in verse 13.

**27. sounded the trumpet:** the ram's horn, the conventional means of rallying forces in Judges (cf. 6.34).

**in the hill country of Ephraim:** a geographical, rather than a strictly tribal, term, possibly signifying the vegetation west of the watershed contrasting with the arid eastern slopes, see on Jos. 20.7. The action was doubtless a local one, but we should not on that account unduly doubt its relevance to 'the people of Israel'. If



their head.<sup>28</sup> And he said to them, 'Follow after me; for the LORD has given your enemies the Moabites into your hand.' So they went down after him, and seized the fords of the Jordan against the Moabites, and allowed not a man to pass over.<sup>29</sup> And they killed at that time about ten thousand of the Moabites, all strong, able-bodied men; not a man escaped.<sup>30</sup> So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

31 After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred of the Philistines with an oxgoad; and he too delivered Israel.

**4** And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, after Ehud died.<sup>2</sup> And the LORD sold them into the hand

the sacral confederacy of Israel had already come into being, Israel would be consciously represented by any of its members.

**28. Follow after me:** Hebrew *rad'pā*, generally in Hebrew 'pursue'. LXX reads 'Come down . . .' (Hebrew *r'dā*), which should probably be accepted; cf. 'so they went down' (verse 28b). The Arabic adjective *radīf* ('riding pillion'), however, suggests that the Hebrew cognate may also mean 'come after' in the sense of 'accompany'.

**for the LORD has given your enemies . . . into your hand:** here the hero-saga has probably borrowed the language of the reassuring oracle from the liturgy of the holy war (cf. 1.2).

**seized the fords of the Jordan against the Moabites:** the interception of the Moabites, disconcerted by the death of their king, at the fords of the Jordan is a further argument for the location of Ehud's exploit at Jericho.

**29. about ten thousand men:** unrealistic, but not necessarily Deuteronomistic, as the older critics suggest, but rather the hyperbole of saga, as is certainly the statement that 'not a man escaped'.

**30.** On the Deuteronomic chronology, see General Introduction, pp. 3-7.

#### *Shamgar the Son of Anath* 31

A brief note on an obscure incident and figure. For the origin of the tradition and the identity of Shamgar, see Introduction, pp. 215f.

**with an ox-goad:** Hebrew *b'malmaḡ hab-bāḡār*; cf. LXX<sup>A</sup>, which reads 'apart from cattle' (Hebrew *mill'haḡ hab-bāḡār*). The exploit with the iron-tipped plough-staff, however, matches the theme of Samson's exploit with the jawbone of an ass, which, however, is a palpable aetiological topographical legend.

of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sis'era, who dwelt in Haro'sheth-ha-goi'im. <sup>3</sup> Then the people of Israel cried to the LORD for help; for he had nine

#### THE EXPLOIT OF DEBORAH AND BARAK AGAINST SISERA 4.1-24

Prose version, with unhistorical editorial reference to Jabin, king of Hazor (verses 2, 7, 17, 23, 24); cf. Jos. 11.1-11 (for critical analysis and relationship with Jos. 11.1-11 and Jg. 5.18-30, see Introduction, pp. 217f.).

#### *Introductory Framework 1-3*

The apostasy of Israel, the wrath of God, public appeal in distress, and divine relief in the sequel. This phase of apostasy and deliverance is dated after the death of Ehud, Shamgar being ignored, which suggests that Shamgar was inserted in the collection of the narratives of the 'great judges' (six if we omit Samson and count Barak as a judge) only secondarily. It is significant that it is only in the editorial introduction (verse 2) and epilogue (verses 23-24) and editorial glosses at verses 7 and 17 that Jabin of Hazor is mentioned, and he does not appear at all in the poetic version of the culmination of the campaign under Deborah and Barak against Sisera (5.18, 19-30) (see Introduction, pp. 216ff.).

**2. Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor:** here an anachronism (see General Introduction, p. 42, and p. 117). On the destruction of Hazor in c. 1225 B.C. in the light of archaeological evidence, see on Jos. 11.1-11.

**Sisera:** the actual enemy of Israel in the time of Barak and Deborah, and the protagonist against them throughout chapters 4 and in 5.19-30. He was certainly independent of Hazor, which had been destroyed probably just over a century before the present action. The ethnic affinity of Sisera is uncertain. The name seems certainly non-Semitic, occurring in the Old Testament only of Temple menials in Ezra 2.53; Neh. 7.55, who may have been foreign, possibly of Hurrian descent, from the region of Gibeon (see on Jos. 9.3). Sisera may have been descended from a Hurrian chief of a hereditary fief of Egypt, or even of Hazor at the height of her power, Hurrian names being attested among Egyptian vassals in Palestine in the Amarna Tablets, and the hereditary status of feudal chiefs in the administrative tablets from the palace of Rās Shamra and Alalakh in the 14th and 12th centuries B.C. Alternatively, Sisera may have been a chief of the sea-peoples, who had invaded Palestine early in the 12th century, and whom Ramses III claimed to have 'settled in fortresses bound in my name'. His seat, Harosheth of the Gentiles is not certainly identified. The name suggests el-Ḥārithīyeh, a modern village in the vicinity of Tell el-'Amār, a site dating from the early Iron Age, which may be the ancient site. Alternatively, Harosheth of the Gentiles may be located at the much larger Bronze Age site of Tell el-Harbaj some 3 miles NW. of el-Ḥārithīyeh (Garstang, *Joshua and Judges*, 1931, pp. 297-98) at the bottleneck between Carmel

hundred chariots of iron, and oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years.

4 Now Deb'orah, a prophetess, the wife of Lap'pidoth, was judging Israel at that time. <sup>5</sup> She used to sit under the palm of Deb'orah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of

and the foothills of Galilee and between the plain of Acco and the great central plain.

**3. nine hundred chariots of iron:** this would involve at least 1,800 horses, an extravagant claim in view of the fact that even in the Monarchy of Solomon and Ahab the stables of Megiddo accommodated only 450 horses, and Solomon is accredited with no more than 1,400 chariots in the whole realm (1 Kg. 10.26).

#### *Digression on Deborah 4-5*

Perhaps a secondary gloss on Deborah, connecting her with the palm of Deborah between Bethel and Ramah, and possibly confusing her with Deborah the nurse of Rachel, who was buried in that vicinity (Gen. 35.8). The statement that she officiated as a judge may be the rendering of the tradition of the significance of the conspicuous tree associated with the name of Deborah in local oaths, like an Arab *wēli*. See further, *Introduction*, p. 219.

**4. Deborah: ('Bee').** Her prophetic power, or charismatic enthusiasm, is noted, in virtue of which she was able to inspire Barak to raise his men. The role of Deborah in this action and in the actual campaign has many parallels among the Arabs, both in ancient times and more recently among the Ruwalla in the north Syrian desert (A. Musil, *In the Arabian Desert*, 1931, pp. 141ff.). The genuineness of this tradition is corroborated by her acclamation as 'a mother in Israel' (5.7). The respect in which Deborah 'judged' Israel is uncertain. It may refer to her inspiration of the successful resistance to Sisera, or, as implied in the gloss in verse 5, it may refer to her wisdom in arbitration, for which we may cite the analogy of the wise woman of Tekoa (2 Sam. 14.2ff.) and Huldah in the days of Josiah (2 Kg. 22.14). It may be more than coincidence that the name of Deborah's husband was Lappidoth ('torches' or 'lightning flashes', Exod. 20.18), and that the leader she inspired was Barak ('lightning'). A number of scholars since Wellhausen have held that Lappidoth and Barak were one and the same. Our opinion is rather that the unknown husband of Deborah was named Lappidoth by tradition, after the well-known Barak. This is supported by the fact that, as distinct from Barak, Lappidoth's father is not named.

**5. the hill country of Ephraim:** the fact that the sacred tree between Ramah and Bethel was in the tribal district of Benjamin confirms the view that 'the hill country of Ephraim' here, as in certain other passages (e.g. 3.27), is a geographical term (see on Jos. 20.7).

E'phraim; and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment.  
 6 She sent and summoned Barak the son of Abin'o-am from Kedesh in Naph'tali, and said to him, 'The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you, "Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking ten thousand from the tribe of Naph'tali and the tribe of Zeb'ulun.

*The Historical Tradition of the Campaign: the rally under Barak 6-10*

This seems the conflation of two traditions, one (verses 6-9) conserved at the sanctuary of Tabor (Dt. 33.18-19; Hos. 5.1), and one (possibly verses 9b-10) current in Zebulun and particularly in Naphtali, the tribe of Barak (see further, Introduction, pp. 219-222).

**6. Barak:** possibly appears as Bedan in the list of judges in 1 Sam. 12.11, where LXX and Syriac read Barak.

**Kedesh in Naphtali:** the name implies a sanctuary. There were possibly two places of this name in Naphtali, the better known being c. 7 miles NNW. of Hazor and the other possibly identical with Khirbet Qadisa on the high ground west of the southern end of the Sea of Galilee, which seems to be visualized in the location of the oak of Zaanannim near Kedesh (verse 11); cf. Jos. 19.33, where the oak of Zaanannim is located in this region. The latter site, further suggested perhaps by the association of Issachar with Barak in the Song of Deborah (5.15), may have been the home of Barak, the association of the unnamed chief of Naphtali in the victory over Jabin of Hazor in Jos. 11.1-11 with the better known Kedesh in upper Galilee being the possible source of the introduction of Jabin of Hazor in the present narrative.

**Mount Tabor:** Jebel et-Ṭūr, the conspicuous limestone dome, well characterized as 'like a breast' by Polybius, which dominates the central part of the great central plain from the north. It was apparently a sanctuary from the early days of the settlement of Israel (Dt. 33.19) until Hosea (Hos. 5.1). Tabor and the foothills of Galilee are relatively well-wooded, and would mask the muster of the Israelites, being at the same time ground unfavourable to attack by chariots.

**gather your men:** the verb in the M.T. is actually used without an object, and means lit. 'draw out'. It is apparently a technical term meaning 'march'; cf. 20.37, where it might mean 'deploy'. The verbal root *māšak* is used of broadcasting seed (Ps. 126.6), and in the present context the word may signify the rally to Tabor in small, staggered parties, to evade suspicion.

**ten thousand:** seems rather a round number, but the mention of Naphtali and Zebulun seems a sober historical tradition, as also the omission of Issachar, which had probably been practically absorbed in the other tribes, though preserving some vestige of their identity at the assembly of the sacral confederacy, apparently associated with a section of Naphtali (5.15, see *ad loc.* on text).

7 And I will draw out Sis'era, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand.' '8 Barak said to her, 'If you will go with me, I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.' 9 And she said, 'I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the LORD will sell Sis'era into the hand of a woman.' Then Deb'orah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. 10 And Barak summoned Zeb'ulun and Naph'tali to Kedesh; and ten thousand men went up at his heels; and Deb'orah went up with him.

7. draw: (Hebrew *māšaq*, cf. verse 6). The verb is transitive according to M.T., with Sisera as object, in which case we should probably understand that Deborah had her own plan for causing a diversion to lure Sisera towards unfavourable ground by the Kishon. But we should expect the same idiom as in verse 6, where the same verb is used, but without an object. LXX and Syriac read 'against Sisera', taking the verb as intransitive as in verse 6.

**the river Kishon:** played an important part in the strategy of the campaign (see on 5.19-21), restricting the movement of Sisera's chariots at a decisive juncture of the battle, or sweeping them away in sudden flood (see on 5.20-21). Unfortunately, the locus of the battle is not specified in the prose version, and the strategy might be inconclusively debated, but we believe that the poetic version in 5.19-21 gives sufficient specification. The Kishon, though draining the whole western half of the great central plain, is a quite insignificant stream, dry for much of the year except from the bottleneck between Carmel and the foothills of Galilee about el-Hārithiyeh, where, fed by the springs from Carmel, it is a deep, though not broad, stream with a muddy bed, dammed back by a sand-bar at its mouth. Here it would be a formidable barrier, but it is unlikely that the Israelites would venture so near Sisera's base, and the action must be located farther east. Immediately west of the bottleneck there is a marshy area, and again about four miles south-east of Megiddo a belt of basalt provides a natural causeway over the Kishon basin (A. D. Baly, *Geography of the Bible*, 1957, p. 152), which, at the same time, it dams, causing marshes long after the rainy season. The latter location is suggested as the site of the battle by the explicit reference in the hymn to 'Taanach by the waters of Megiddo' (5.19).

**and I will give him into your hand:** the oracle through the prophetess, probably in the traditional language of the oracle in the holy war (cf. 1.2).

9. Kedesh: the muster of 10,000 men of Zebulun and Naphtali at Kedesh (Khirbet Qadisa; see on verse 6) seems a doublet of the muster of the same number from the same tribes at Tabor (verse 6), possibly reflecting a variant tribal tradition.



11 Now Heber the Ken'ite had separated from the Ken'ites, the descendants of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Za-anan'nim, which is near Kedesh.

12 When Sis'era was told that Barak the son of Abin'o-am had gone up to Mount Tabor, <sup>13</sup> Sis'era called out all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the men who were with him, from Haro'sheth-ha-goi'im to the river Kishon. <sup>14</sup> And Deb'orah said to Barak, 'Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has given Sis'era into your hand. Does not the LORD go out before you?' So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. <sup>15</sup> And the LORD routed Sis'era and all his chariots and all his

On the other hand, the site of Tell Abū Qadis, c. 2½ miles SE. of Megiddo, was confused by tradition with the place of the muster. The encampment of Heber the Kenite so near the scene of the battle would admirably suit the incident of the refuge and death of Sisera (so Nötscher, *op. cit.*, p. 20). Here again, however, in the location of this encampment at Kedesh by the oak of Zaanannim (verse 11) the tradition of an encampment near Megiddo seems to be confused with that of the muster at Khirbet Qadisa west of the southern end of the Sea of Galilee.

#### *Digression on Heber the Kenite (secondary) 11*

**Heber the Kenite:** here introduced somewhat abruptly, a secondary expansion suggested by Kedesh and in anticipation of the role which his wife Jael was to play in the sequel to the battle (verse 17ff.). This may still preserve a genuine tradition, the Kenites being a smith caste, whose presence at the place of muster is natural.

#### *The Battle 12-16*

**12. Tabor:** the muster-place of the Israelites reported to Sisera, who now heads for the Kishon (verse 13). This movement, which involved a detour to the river, is hard to understand unless a diversion had been created towards Megiddo to lure Sisera into chosen terrain, for which we have argued in our note on verse 7. Perhaps a rumour was disseminated that the Israelites intended to attack Megiddo or Taanach to divert Sisera south of the Kishon between the river and the mountains to restrict the movement of his chariots. Some such advantage to the Israelites is suggested in verse 14 by Deborah's order to advance **For this is the day in which the LORD has given Sisera into your hand.**

**15. the LORD routed Sisera:** or 'threw S. into confusion', conceivably by the unexpected resistance of the Israelites, which enabled them to exploit the marshy terrain. The account of the battle, as so often in the Old Testament, is unexpectedly

army before Barak at the edge of the sword; and Sis'era alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot.<sup>16</sup> And Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Haro'sheth-ha-goi'im, and all the army of Sis'era fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

17 But Sis'era fled away on foot to the tent of Ja'el, the wife of Heber the Ken'ite; for there was peace between Jabin the king of

laconic. The poetic version is more explicit at this point, stating that the stars in their courses fought against Sisera, and adding that the river Kishon either swept them away or headed them off (5.20-21). A passage in the Rās Shamra texts refers to the stars as the source of rain, so that a sudden rainstorm seems to be indicated as the cause of Sisera's sudden discomfiture, which is directly referred to God in the prose version. The marshes of the Kishon near Megiddo might account for the initial discomfiture of the chariotry of the too confident Sisera, but the flood of the lower Kishon, which the writer has seen between Haifa and Megiddo as a strong-flowing current of liquid mud, unapproachable on vague banks which had become a widespread muddy quagmire, would head off the fugitives from their base at Harosheth (verse 16) or sweep them away headlong if they were rash enough to attempt to cross.

**Sisera alighted from his chariot:** perhaps to facilitate his flight in the mud, but also possibly to evade detection. However this may be, it was something which a saga would not fail to stress as emphasizing the humiliation of Sisera.

#### *The Death of Sisera in the Tent of Jael 17-22*

On the location of the site of the Kenite tent where Sisera was killed at Tell Abū Qadis near Taanach and Megiddo, see Introduction to Judges, p. 218. The Kenites, as itinerant smiths, would always have business about the Canaanite cities, in the neighbourhood of which they camped, like the nomad tinkers, the Nawwār and Şulayb, at the present time. Their proximity to the combatants too is not inappropriate. It is noteworthy that Sisera reached the tent of Jael on foot and was killed apparently not long before Barak arrived at the tent (verse 22), probably after his pursuit of the fugitive chariotry westwards towards Harosheth (verse 16).

**17. the tent of Jael:** we should expect it to be termed the tent of her husband Heber. It may refer to the screened harem section of the long Bedouin tent, which would be more secure. In this case Jael, true to the desert tradition, would be caught between the horns of a dilemma: to grant the conventional sanctuary and hospitality to the refugee and at the same time to vindicate her honour from suspicion, which she did in the drastic way described. Alternatively, the specific mention of her tent may indicate that she was an older, discarded wife of Heber.

Hazor and the house of Heber the Ken'ite. <sup>18</sup>And Ja'el came out to meet Sis'era, and said to him, 'Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; have no fear.' So he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. <sup>19</sup>And he said to her, 'Pray, give me a little water to drink; for I am thirsty.' So she opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. <sup>20</sup>And he said to her, 'Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and asks you, "Is any one here?" say, No.' <sup>21</sup>But Ja'el the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and

**there was peace between Jabin . . . and the house of Heber:** we regard this as a gloss by an editor, who has mistaken the Kedesh of verse 11 (cf.) for the city of the same name in upper Galilee; cf. the view of Hertzberg (op. cit., p. 176, after Moore, Budde, Nowack, Gressmann, Burney, Eissfeldt, and Simpson) that there is a conflation of two traditions, one of Heber a Kenite, who had revoked his allegiance to Jabin of Hazor to throw in his lot with the Israelites in the campaign of Jos. 11.1-11, and another of Jael, a Kenite woman who slew Sisera much later. Actually, the relation between Jabin of Hazor and a Kenite family is quite feasible, especially if, as is probable, the Kenites were itinerant smiths who had special immunities (Gen. 4.15).

**18. Jael came out to meet Sisera:** if this is not meant to emphasize the initiative of Jael in anticipation of the slaughter of Sisera it may indicate the nomad convention of sanctuary claimed at a certain distance from the tent, in certain cases till recently in Transjordan as far as a man may throw a camel-stick (A. Jaussen, *Coutumes des Arabes au Pays de Moab*, 1908, p. 214).

**a rug:** the Hebrew word here (*š' mīkēāh*) is used only here in the Old Testament and its etymology is uncertain. LXX variously translates by 'covering' or 'screen' and by 'leather covering', using a word which generally translates 'tent-curtain', which is also understood by the Hexaplar Syriac. The reference is probably to the screened quarter of the women, which would give Sisera a sense of false security and, from Jael's point of view, hide an embarrassing guest.

**19. The request for water,** apart from being natural, was designed to establish the link of hospitality which would increase his security, as in the case of the notorious Renauld de Châtillon in the tent of Šalāh ed-Dīn after the battle of Ḥaṭṭīn in 1187, which, however, the Sultan was careful not to give personally. **a skin of milk:** the well-known article of furniture in a Bedouin tent, the skin which serves as churn, as 5.25 suggests in referring to butter-milk (Hebrew *hem'āh*, Arabic *libn*), a most refreshing drink and the regular refreshment offered on arrival at a Bedouin encampment.

**21. tent peg:** much longer and sharper than is necessary in our soft turf, and in a smith's tribe possibly of metal.

took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, till it went down into the ground, as he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died. <sup>22</sup>And behold, as Barak pursued Sis'era, Ja'el went out to meet him, and said to him, 'Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking.' So he went in to her tent; and there lay Sis'era dead, with the tent peg in his temple.

<sup>23</sup> So on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the people of Israel. <sup>24</sup>And the hand of the people of Israel bore harder and harder on Jabin the king of Canaan, until they destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

**5** Then sang Deb'orah and Barak the son of Abin'o-am on that day:

<sup>a</sup> 'That the leaders took the lead in Israel,  
that the people offered themselves willingly,  
bless the LORD!

**a hammer:** possibly for driving in the tent-pegs. Among modern Bedouin pitching the tent and striking camp is women's work, so that Jael would not be awkward with the hammer. In the poetic version (verse 26) the hammer is 'the workman's mallet', her clan being smiths. Here it is explicitly stated that Jael killed Sisera in his sleep, which would be more natural if she used a tent-peg and a hammer. This is not contradicted in the poem, but the statement that 'she crushed his head' (5.26) and 'he fell . . . at her feet' (5.27) rather suggests a variant tradition that she felled him with a hammer as he drank while still standing, this being combined with the prose tradition in 5.26.

**into his temple:** Hebrew *raḥkātō*. Possibly attested in this sense only in Ca. 4.3, 6.7 (RSV 'cheeks'). G. R. Driver (in a private communication cited by Simpson, op. cit., p. 16) suggests that it may signify 'brain' (lit. 'soft part'). Driver suggests further that the following verb *wattiṣnaḥ*, apparently attested in Old Testament only in Jos. 15.18=Jg. 1.14, meaning possibly 'beat', 'struck' (see on Jos. 15.18), may be cognate with Akkadian *ṣanaḥu* ('to discharge', of mucus), so describing Sisera's brains as running out on the ground.

**for weariness:** (Hebrew *wayyā'ap*) is taken by Driver after LXX 'and he twitched convulsively' after a possible Syriac cognate.

**22. as Barak pursued Sisera:** having first presumably pursued the chariots

westwards towards Harosheth (verse 16), and then, not finding Sisera, having come back eastwards.

### *Editorial Epilogue 23-24*

Introducing Jabin of Hazor, of whom the original tradition knew nothing at this date (see Introductory Framework, verses 1-3, p. 267).

### THE SONG OF DEBORAH 5.1-31

For our presentation of the view of Weiser that the account of the battle is limited to verses 19-30, introduced by the reference to Zebulun and Naphtali in the tribal roll-call in the general assembly of the sacral confederacy (verse 18) and that verses 19-30 are a hymn of praise to Yahweh for the latest vindication of his purpose and his people in the liturgy of the renewal of the Covenant soon after the victory, see Introduction, p. 221.

The liturgy begins with the note on the occasion (verse 2, see note for our interpretation, which differs from *RSV*), and continues with the introduction to a hymn on the theophany of Yahweh God of Sinai (verses 3-5), the reminiscence of recent sufferings (verses 6-8), with the transition to the theme of God's renewed grace (verses 9-11), which incidentally reflects the pattern of Israel's apostasy and degradation (cf. verse 8a) and the mercy of God, which is the framework giving coherence to the pre-Deuteronomic collection of the traditions of the 'great judges' and to the Deuteronomic framework of the book as a whole. The apostrophe to Deborah (verse 12a) leads to the introduction of Barak and other notables, the representatives of the various tribes, in a festal procession (verses 12b-15a), the integrity of the people thus symbolized being palpable evidence of God's vindication of his cause (*RSV* 'the triumphs of the Lord', verse 11; see note). In verses 14-18 the various members of the sacral confederacy are named, whether present or absent, in what we have termed a tribal roll-call, which is a further assertion of the integrity of the people. Here dramatically Zebulun and Naphtali are kept to the end (verse 18), their honourable mention leading to the hymn of praise for the victory over Sisera (verses 19-30) in which they had played such a distinguished part with the result that God's people was vindicated and the present assembly was possible. Though the hymnal elements are strictly limited to the hymn on the theophany (verses 3-5) and the description of the battle (verses 19-30), the other elements of the liturgy, usually more prosaic in character, were on this occasion transformed by the mood of Deborah, who in virtue of her prophetic elation is given the leading part in the direction of the liturgy of the sacrament of the Covenant. No element in the chapter, however, not even the hymn in verses 19-30, may be divorced from the cultic occasion. The relevance of the fragmentary hymn on the theophany (verses 3-5) to such an occasion is obvious. The relevance of the triumph song (verses 19-30) to the sacrament of the Covenant is also apparent from the exclusion of Meroz from the fellowship by curse (verse 23) and the final curse and blessing (verse 31), which should probably be considered apart from the hymn, and which reflect the curse and blessing of Dt. 27.11ff.



<sup>3</sup> 'Hear, O kings; give ear, O princes;  
to the LORD I will sing,  
I will make melody to the LORD, the God of Israel.

<sup>4</sup> 'LORD, when thou didst go forth from Se'ir,  
when thou didst march from the region of Edom,  
the earth trembled,  
and the heavens dropped,  
yea, the clouds dropped water.

### *Editorial Introduction 1*

Ascribing the hymnal elements to Deborah, with the secondary addition of 'and Barak the son of Abinoam'.

### *The Occasion 2*

**That the leaders took the lead . . .** after LXX<sup>A</sup>, but this is not the natural translation of the Hebrew, the only justification being that the possible cognate of the words translated 'took the lead' means 'to be lofty'. The phrase *bip'rōa' p'rā'ôl* means rather 'when the flowing hair was let loose' (cf. Dt. 32.42; Num. 6.5; Ezek. 44.20). The last two passages refer to hair unshorn in consequence of a vow of consecration, and the first refers to the long hair of warriors, who in ancient times were consecrated in war. The infinitive construct introduced by the preposition *b'* could refer to the past or the present. In the past it would refer either to the vows and volunteering (*hiṭnaddēb*, 'offering themselves willingly') for the recent campaign, or perhaps, on the Arab analogy, to the custom of women letting their hair loose and baring their breasts in encouraging the men to battle. In the present it might refer to a renewal of vows as 'the people' (verse 2b), possibly reading 'the people of Yahweh', omitting 'bless' as a late insertion, as the parallelism in the couplet demands. 'Bless' was possibly a misplaced rubric, really introducing the hymn on the theophany in the sequel. The long hair might symbolize a reversion to desert conditions; cf. the long 'love-locks' (*nuwās*) of the Bedouin, the loss of which was a particular disgrace. 'Israel' has a peculiar significance as the religious community, realized at the general assembly at the sacramental renewal of the Covenant, which is also the significance of 'the people of Yahweh' (*'am yhw'h*, verse 2b, omitting 'bless'). The people (*hā-'ām*) is generally a kinship, used of a people together with its eponymous forefather (also *'am*), or its god, who is often considered as a kinsman, as in the Egyptian Execration Texts naming Amorite tribesmen in Palestine c. 1850-1800 B.C. In Israel also it denotes the people with its God, and so comes to denote often the religious community in solemn assembly, where that solidarity between community and God was specifically realized.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE HYMN ON THE THEOPHANY 3

**kings . . . princes:** (better 'kings . . . rulers'). The natural antagonists to the sovereignty of God are cited to listen to the account of his triumph and to acknowledge his sovereignty. This is a conventional motif in passages on the theme of the Kingship of God (e.g. Ps. 2.2; Isa. 52.15; Hab. 1.10. Cf. Ps. 68.32 (M.T. 33)).

**I will sing:** the conventional introduction to a hymn, as also in the Rās Shamra texts. Deborah, a prototype here of later cultic prophets (Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien III: Kultprophetie und prophetische Psalmen*, 1923), gives expression to the praises of the assembly.

**to the LORD:** in the M.T. the personal pronoun 'I' is repeated, which makes it uncertain whether the meaning is 'I, even I, will sing to the Lord', or, as Weiser maintains (op. cit., p. 73), is a cultic interjection 'I am for Yahweh'; cf. 'As for me and my house we will serve the Lord' in the context of the Covenant sacrament (Jos. 24.15). The parallel with the following line suggests that the second pronoun is a dittograph, as indicated by its omission in certain MSS.

**I will make melody:** the verb literally means 'to pluck the strings' (cf. Amos 5.23), and is an early reference to instrumental music in psalmody.

## INVOCATION OF YAHWEH IN TERMS OF THE SINAI THEOPHANY 4-5

The close affinity in language and conception with Dt. 33.2ff. and Ps. 68.7f. (M.T. 8f.) (cf. Ps. 77.17f. (M.T. 18f.); Mic. 1.3f., etc.) indicates the stereotyped language of the liturgy, and relates not to the coming of Yahweh to the particular battle with Sisera, but, as the above passages indicate, to his presence in the Sacrament of the Covenant (Weiser, op. cit., p. 74). 'The Lord, the God of Israel' (verse 3b) is specifically the title of Yahweh in the assembly of his people on this occasion, whereby the various elements of Israel, who had dispersed in the settlement, realized their solidarity as the people of Yahweh in the sacramental experience of Exodus and Covenant (cf. Jos. 24).

The specific reference to the theophany on the occasion of the Covenant in the desert and the specific association of Yahweh with Sinai reflect the theological difficulty for the primitive mind of a God who was specifically attached to a certain locality being present with his community in new localities and of the validity of his worship at new cult-sites. This is obviously reflected in the question of the presence of God when Israel was to leave Sinai (Exod. 32.34, 33.12-16, J) and in the practice of pilgrimage to Sinai-Horeb (1 Kg. 19.8), which is possibly the source of the itinerary of the Exodus and desert wandering (Noth, 'Der Wallfahrtsweg zum Sinai', *PJB XXXVI*, 1940, pp. 7ff.).

**4. didst go forth . . . didst march:** similarly paired in the description of the theophany in Ps. 68.7 (M.T. 8) and Hab. 3.12, 13.

**Seir:** specifically associated, as here, with Edom in Gen. 35.8 and Dt. 2.5, latterly east of the Arabah depression, but somewhat vaguely understood and occasionally referred to the escarpment west of the Arabah (see on Jos. 11.17).

- <sup>5</sup> The mountains quaked before the LORD,  
yon Sinai before the LORD, the God of Israel.
- <sup>6</sup> 'In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,  
in the days of Ja'el, caravans ceased  
and travellers kept to the byways.
- <sup>7</sup> The peasantry ceased in Israel, they ceased  
until you arose, Deb'orah,  
arose as a mother in Israel.

**the heavens dropped:** (Hebrew *nāṭāpû*, 'dripped'). The Aramaic and Greek translations indicate doubt in this reading, suggesting variously 'declined', 'were disturbed', 'were removed', imagery which recalls 2 Sam. 22.8. 'Dripped' is possibly a scribal corruption suggested by the same verb in the immediate sequel 'the clouds dripped water'. Up to this point the Lord is addressed in the second person, as distinct from the statements about him in the third person in verse 5. The function of the singer is to invoke and address God on behalf of the community (verse 4) and to assure the community of the divine presence (verse 5). He, or she, is a mediator representing the community before God and the channel of God's communication to the community.

**5. the mountains quaked:** (reading Hebrew *nāzōllû* for M.T. *nāz'lu*, 'flowed down' after LXX). Both readings are possible in the context, but in view of the probably chiasmic arrangement of the parallelism the former reading is almost certainly correct.

**yon Sinai:** not a correct translation of the Hebrew, nor must we assume here and in Ps. 68.8 (M.T. 9) that this is a late gloss, 'this is Sinai'. The word, taken as a demonstrative (*zeh*), is actually an older form of the relative particle *d'* in Aramaic and Ugaritic (cf. Arabic *dhû* ('master of . . .')). Qualifying Yahweh, it means 'he of Sinai'.

**the LORD, the God of Israel:** repeated emphatically at the end of the invocation of the presence of Yahweh in the assembly of the sacral community in emphasis of the invocation and assurance of his presence.

#### REMINISCENCE OF RECENT SUFFERING AND DEGRADATION OF ISRAEL AS A PRELUDE TO THE DIVINE DELIVERANCE 6-8

Note the different literary form, and possibly also a different voice.

**6. Shamgar, the son of Anath:** the reference possibly suggested the mention of Shamgar in 3.31, where he is included, probably secondarily, among the 'great judges' (see *ad loc.*). The present passage would naturally suggest that Shamgar was really an oppressor (see Introduction to Judges, pp. 215f. The reference to **Jael** is



- <sup>8</sup> When new gods were chosen,  
 then war was in the gates.  
 Was shield or spear to be seen  
 among forty thousand in Israel?

also strange in this context, since, if the same person as the assassin of Sisera is indicated, she was not active until after Deborah arose (verse 7). Ewald proposed to read Jael (cf. 10.3), and another proposed emendation is 'ôlām ('of old') for yā'ēl (Jael) (so Burney, *op. cit.*, p. 114, after C. J. Ball). As these are conjectural emendations unsupported by the versions, the assumed corruption must have been relatively early in the Hebrew text. Weiser, on the other hand, proposes that Shamgar's time marked the beginning and Jael's the end of the oppression of Israel. The reading Jael here suggested presumably that Shamgar was a champion of Israel rather than an oppressor, which prompted his inclusion among the 'great judges' in 3.31.

**caravans ceased:** (so *RSV* correctly, reading 'ôr'hôt for M.T. 'orāhôt, 'highways'). This implies a reversion to the local anarchy so graphically illustrated in the Amarna Tablets, which attest the robbery of a Babylonian caravan at Hinnatuni (Khirbet el-Beidāwīyeh at the western end of the plain of the Baṭṭūf north-east of Haifa). The local independence of Canaanite chiefs and their private wars and depredations, which made traffic unsafe, also prevented the cohesion of the various elements of Israel, even single wayfarers being obliged to use byways. In a wider historical context this was the result of the relaxation of Egyptian control in Palestine and possibly of the disruption caused by the invasion of the Philistines and other sea-peoples, which may have been the proper context of Shamgar. Under these circumstances the periodic sacrament of the Covenant at the tribal assembly may have been suspended. This would account for the absence of so many tribes, which is noted without censure in verses 15b-17.

**7. The peasantry ceased:** Hebrew ḥāḏ'lū p'rāzōn, treating the latter word as a collective singular, but possibly p'rāzīm should be read in strict agreement with the verb, or p'rāzōt ('open villages'), as in Ezek. 38.11; Zech. 2.4 (M.T. 8); Est. 9.19, with certain mss. LXX, however, suggests the reading rôz'nīm ('rulers'), the chief scribal variant being a dittography of *r*, which closely resembles *p* in the proto-Hebraic script. This is supported by the reference to the authority of Deborah in the parallel colon.

**until you arose:** the verbal affirmative is ambiguous (cf. *AV* 'until I arose'). But it is probably an archaic form of the second person feminine singular, as *RSV* reads, and is supported by the address to Deborah in verse 12. LXX, reading third person feminine singular, indicates doubt in the Hebrew text.

**a mother in Israel:** a title implying respect and authority; cf. 'father' (2 Kg. 2.12, 13.14), also of prophets. Weiser, rightly in our opinion, emphasizes the role of

Deborah in the convocation of the amphictyonic assembly after a considerable lapse. The primary relation of chapter 5 to this occasion rather than to the battle thus explains the reference here to her rather than to Barak the actual victor in the battle, who, even when he does appear, is second to Deborah.

8. **When new gods were chosen:** if the text is correct, the literal meaning is 'they [singular of indefinite subject] chose new gods'. The text is also in doubt in the following parallel colon, nor do the versions give any material help. In the parallel colon (RSV, 'when war was in the gates') Budde (*Das Buch der Richter*, 1897, *ad loc.*) after LXX and the Syriac version proposes with a minimum of emendation:

God's sacrifices ceased,  
Barley bread was spent.

*zib<sup>h</sup> hē 'lōhīm ḥāḏ<sup>h</sup> lū*  
*'āzal lehem š'ārīm*

This involves the reading *zib<sup>h</sup> hē* for *yib<sup>h</sup> har* ('one chose'), which is not a drastic emendation of the script, and the assumption of the omission of *l* after *'āz* ('then'), quite a natural scribal error (haplography) before *l* of the following word *lehem*. This is feasible, giving a good parallel between the due of God and the daily food of the Israelite peasantry.

Equally feasible, though involving a greater, but still possible, change of text, is the suggestion of Ball incorporated by Burney (op. cit., pp. 117, 119):

They had no armourers,  
Armed men failed from the cities.

*ḥās<sup>h</sup> rā lāhem ḥārāšīm*  
*'āz<sup>h</sup> lū ḥ<sup>h</sup> mūšīm mē'ir*

This would admirably accord with the following couplet, which refers to the lack of arms among the Israelites; cf. conditions before Saul's revolt, when the Israelites had to rely on the Philistines to set even their agricultural implements (1 Sam. 13.19-22).

Another conjectural emendation to the same general effect, but much nearer the M.T., is that of Zapletal, adopted by Hertzberg (op. cit., p. 171):

Deaf were the young warriors of God (i.e. to the call to arms),  
At an end was war before the gates (i.e. warlike exercises).

*baḥūrē 'lōhīm ḥēr<sup>h</sup> šīm*  
*'āzal lehem bašš'ārīm*

Weiser, however (op. cit., pp. 75-76), would retain the Hebrew text, agreeing with RSV in the rendering 'They chose strange gods', and continuing with 'Gods, whom formerly they had not known', for which his easiest reading is *'āz 'lōhīm lō' š'ārīm* or *mē'āz*. . . . With little drastic emendation of the text, this re-echoes the words of



<sup>9</sup> My heart goes out to the commanders of Israel  
who offered themselves willingly among the people.  
Bless the LORD.

<sup>10</sup> 'Tell of it, you who ride on tawny asses,  
you who sit on rich carpets  
and you who walk by the way.

Dt. 32.17 and touches upon a vital feature of the Covenant sacrament. This, then, is the element of confession of sin in relation to the disasters of Israel. This is the theology of the framework of the pre-Deuteronomic collection of the traditions of the 'great judges' and of the Deuteronomic history in the Book of Judges, and its root is in the Sacrament of the Covenant (cf. Jos. 24.19-21); cf. the curses in Dt. 27.15-26ff., which include weakness before the enemy in consequence of broken commandments, including apostasy.

ANTICIPATION OF THE HYMN ON GOD'S VINDICATION (RSV 'the triumphs of God', verse 11) IN THE TRIBAL ASSEMBLY, WITH NOTICE OF THE ASSEMBLY OF 'THE PEOPLE OF YAHWEH' (verse 11b) AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES (verses 9-10) 9-11  
Without specifying any cultic occasion, Nötscher (op. cit., p. 23) also conjectures a reference to a festal procession in verses 9-11.

**9. My heart goes out to the commanders of Israel:** (Hebrew *libbi l'hôk'kê yiśrā'el*, lit. 'my heart to the commanders'). If the text is correct the sense would be 'I animadvert upon . . .', the heart being for the ancient Hebrew the seat of cognition; Burney, however (op. cit., p. 122), adopts Ball's suggestion *l'kâ* for *libbi*, translating 'Come, ye governors!', where the vocative *l'* may be paralleled in the Rās Shamra texts.

**commanders:** Hebrew *hōk'kê* (lit. 'those who impose statutes'), perhaps better *m'hōk'kê*, as proposed by Ball.

**who offered themselves willingly:** possibly present tense, in which case it would refer to the representatives of Israel voluntarily offering themselves in a renewal of allegiance to Yahweh in the Covenant, which was represented as a matter of free choice; cf. Jos. 24.15, 'Choose you this day whom you will serve.'

**among the people:** (*bā'am*). Perhaps we should rather render 'as the people' (sc. of Yahweh), the preposition expressing that capacity in which the rulers freely dedicated themselves.

**Bless the LORD:** not to be omitted as a meaningless repetition of the exclamation in verse 2, as many commentators suggest. After the catalogue of the degradation of Israel (verses 6-9) it strikes an auspicious note in anticipation of the freedom to renew the Covenant and of the hymn on the victory which made that possible.

**10. you who ride on tawny asses, or, on the Arabic analogy, 'roan asses'.** The

? military motif

- <sup>11</sup> To the sound of musicians at the watering places,  
 there they repeat the triumphs of the LORD,  
 the triumphs of his peasantry in Israel.

'Then down to the gates marched the people of the LORD.

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reference is to the more dignified members of society, as **you who walk by the way** refers to more humble persons.

**you who sit on rich carpets:** something of a paraphrase, the Hebrew word rendered 'carpets' meaning etymologically 'what is stretched out'. The phrase disrupts the metric system, and it is feasibly suggested that it should be emended, with less disturbance of the Hebrew text than the translation suggests, 'Let them consider it' (*yāšîḥū 'al libbām*). We consider the phrase more likely to be a gloss on the dignitaries, meaning 'those who sit in judgment'.

**tell of it:** better 'con it over', as the pious man does of the law (Ps. 1.2).

**11. To the sound of musicians at the watering places:** so RSV, after LXX. Weiser is possibly right in connecting Hebrew *m'ḥaš'sîm* (RSV 'musicians') with the Hebrew word for 'half' and in seeing a reference to antiphonal singing, in which case we might emend the masculine of the participle to the feminine, rendering:

At the voice of the women singing antiphonally as they draw water,  
 Let them repeat in response Yahweh's acts of vindication.

In support of this rendering the same verb *ṭnn* is attested in the Rās Shamra texts, meaning 'to repeat'. We should note E. F. C. Rosenmüller's suggestion (*Scholia in Vetus Testamentum-Judices et Ruth*, 1835, *ad loc.*) to retain the Hebrew text, but to take the participle *m'ḥaš'sîm* as referring to the shepherds dividing their flocks, as the writer has seen Arab shepherds do by the sound of the voice, sheep separating from goats at the troughs by the wells. Hence the rendering may be:

At the voice of the (shepherds) shedding out the flocks as they draw water,  
 Let them repeat in response Yahweh's acts of vindication.

Weiser's further proposal (*op. cit.*, p. 80) should be noted, that the initial preposition suggests the comparative:

Louder than the voice of those that distribute water among the well-channels  
 Let them repeat . . .

Our preference is for Weiser's first suggestion.

<sup>12</sup> 'Awake, awake, Deb'orah!

Awake, awake, utter a song!

Arise, Barak, lead away your captives,

O son of Abin'o-am.

**triumphs:** *šd'kôl*, lit. 'acts right rather than 'righteous', which is a secondary meaning. The feminine plural, however, may indicate the abstract, hence our 'vindication'. Hebrew *šedek* connotes essentially 'that which is right or proper with relation to a given object', e.g. right paths (*ma'g'le šedek*) in Ps. 23.3, and right offerings (*zib'hê šedek*) in Dt. 33.19, or what measures up to a norm, e.g. right weight (*'eben šedek*) in Dt. 25.15. It may also mean 'legitimate', as in Phoenician inscriptions, when a king claims that he is *melek šedek*, 'a legitimate king' and not a usurper; cf. in the Legend of King Krt in the Rās Shamra texts, where the mother of a dynasty is described as *'att šdk*, 'a proper wife', 'a legitimate queen'. In the present context the word if really plural refers to the acts which substantiate the purpose of God, thus vindicating it and the people through whom and for whom it is to be fulfilled, and if an abstract it denotes such vindication. RSV 'triumphs' in this passage is prompted by *šedek* in parallelism with *y'šl'āh* in Isa. 62.1. The latter word normally means 'deliverance', but that does not invalidate our meaning 'vindication' as being nearer the basic meaning of *šedek*, even in Isa. 62.1.

**his peasantry:** (Hebrew *pir'zônô*). Collective singular, possibly the inhabitants of open villages (*p'rāzôl*) (see on verse 7). There may be a dittograph in the case of initial *p*, however, the original being *roznô* ('his rule'), *p* and *r* closely resembling each other in the proto-Hebraic script. The vindication of God's rule would have point here in view of the summons 'Hear, O kings; give ear, O princes' (actually *rôz'nîm*).

**Then down to the gates marched the people of the LORD:** not to the gates, or cities, of the enemy (Burney, Grether), which was not Israelite strategy. In the Rās Shamra texts (14th century), to which the present passage stands more closely in linguistic forms than any other in the Old Testament, the preposition *l* means 'from' as well as 'to'; so here and probably also in Jg. 2.9, 19.30, 21.19. The verb may be perfect or, with change of pointing, jussive. Thus we translate 'Then let the people of the Lord come down from the gates'. 'Gates' signifies by synecdoche the several cities, or fortified hill-settlements, of Israel, and 'the people of Yahweh' ('*am yhw*) is the technical description of the sacral community of Israel.

#### APOSTROPHE TO DEBORAH AND BARAK 12

**awake, utter a song:** Hebrew '*ûrî dabb'ri šîr*, '*ûrî* being better translated 'rouse thee'. According to RSV this might seem an interjection of the devotees, encouraging Deborah to the hymn of praise for the recent victory (verses 19-30). But as this does not begin immediately we may question the translation. 'Speak a

- 13 Then down marched the remnant of the noble;  
the people of the LORD marched down for him against the  
mighty.

song' is a unique expression in the Old Testament. Actually certain families of LXX and the Syriac translation of one Greek version read 'raise the tens of thousands of thy people' (*hā'ārī rib'ḥōt 'ammēk*), 'song' being possibly a later addition after the corruption of *rib'ḥōt* to *dabb'ri*. We propose a much simpler emendation, '*ārī dabb'ri*' <sup>a</sup>*sīrayik*, 'rouse thee, lead behind thee thy prisoners'. Deborah and Barak lead the procession of the tribes, or their representatives, with the captives of the recent battle. Our emendation, which posits the meaning of *dabbēr* derived from a word cognate with Arabic *dubr* ('back'), visualizes an arrangement like the tow-rafts of timber (*dōb'rot*) in 1 Kg. 5.9 (M.T. 23). The emendation has the merit of restoring the parallelism with the following colon with the minimum of disturbance of the M.T.

lead away your captives: rather, 'parade the captives'; cf. Syriac 'lead captive those who would take thee captive' (cf. Isa. 14.2). For a triumphal parade of captives, cf. the well-known ivory incision depicting the parade of captives by a triumphant king from the palace of Megiddo (c. 1350-1150 B.C.) (ANEP, Pl. 332).

#### THE ROLL-CALL OF THE TRIBES 13-18

Even those absent are named to preserve the integrity of the sacral confederacy according to the ancient Hebrew conception of the substantial significance of the name. The absence of certain tribes who are thus named is probably owing to the lapse of the assembly due to stiffening of Canaanite resistance, this being the first occasion of its resumption, which was on a limited scale. The absence of Asher in the foothills east of Acco may indicate that Harosheth, Sisera's fortress, was still an effective barrier, and the border tribes Reuben, Gad (for M.T. 'Gilead', verse 17), and Dan in the far north had too precarious a foothold to attend in force, and it is questionable if Judah, unmentioned in the passage, was yet a member of the confederacy.

#### 13. Then down marched the remnant of the noble;

The people of the LORD marched down for him against the mighty.  
This is the general sense though not the translation of M.T., which as it stands is not patient of satisfactory translation. Jewish tradition suggests that the word rendered marched down (M.T. *y'rag*) should be read 'may he cause to have dominion over', which, with slight emendation, is possible but unlikely. LXX reads:

Then came down a remnant to the strong ones;

The people of the Lord came down to him among the mighty ones.

- 14 From E'phraim they set out thither into the valley,  
 following you, Benjamin, with your kinsmen;  
 from Machir marched down the commanders,  
 and from Zeb'ulun those who bear the marshal's staff;

This is a feasible translation differing from the M.T. only in the vowel change in *y'rad* and in the reading 'to him' for 'to me'. We might further suggest that for M.T. *šārīd l'addīrīm* we should read *yīsrā'el bā'addīrīm* which involves less of a disturbance of the text than is at first sight apparent, *d* in M.T. *šārīd* being an easy corruption of 'in the proto-Hebraic script and initial *y* of our *yīsrā'el* being misplaced to the second syllable of *šārīd* after the corruption. This would restore the parallelism *yīsrā'el* . . . 'am yhwēh. We further suggest that the preposition in *baggibbōrīm* signifies not 'against', as in RSV, but 'in the person of'; hence we translate:

Then came down Israel in the person of the notables;  
 The people of Yahweh came down to him in the person of their men of substance.

The reference is not to the muster for the battle, but to the gathering of the people of Yahweh through their representatives to the assembly. Our proposed emendations and translation notwithstanding, we admit that *šārīd* and *gibbōrīm* of M.T. in the sense of 'survivors' and 'warriors' might have a particular point, especially after the mention of Deborah and Barak with the prisoners at the head of the procession. The participants and survivors might then follow, to be followed then by tribal representatives (verses 14-15a).

Weiser (op. cit., pp. 85-86) notes the significant fact that in verses 9, 13-15a the notables of the various tribes are mentioned as present, whereas in 15b-17 the tribes which are absent are referred to in the mass. Obviously the notables are representing their tribes at the cultic occasion for which he argues. On the other hand, when the warlike exploit of Zebulun and Naphtali is mentioned (verse 18), those tribes as a whole are mentioned, despite the fact that the representatives of Zebulun at least have already been mentioned in the M.T. (verse 14d). Obviously then verse 19ff. relates to the battle and verses 13-17 to the tribal assembly.

14. From Ephraim they set out thither into the valley: reading *minnī 'eprayīm šārū šām bā'ēneḳ* for M.T. *minnī 'eprayīm šoršām bā'a-mālēḳ*, 'from Ephraim their root in Amalek', meaningless and obviously corrupt. RSV 'into the valley' (after LXX<sup>a</sup>, Lucian's recension, and Theodotion) is surely correct, the reference being to the assembly in the valley either at Shechem, or, we think, more probably at Tabor in the great central plain (so Weiser, op. cit., p. 86). M.T. *šoršām* ('their root') must be the corruption of a verb, either *šārū* ('they came forth'), or possibly *m' ašš'rim* ('they marched out in order'). For the location of Ephraim and the other tribes, see on Jos. 16.4-10 and generally Jos. 15-19.



- <sup>15</sup> the princes of Is'sachar came with Deb'orah,  
 and Is'sachar faithful to Barak;  
 into the valley they rushed forth at his heels.  
 Among the clans of Reuben  
 there were great searchings of heart.

**Following you, Benjamin, with your kinsmen:** the text has been suspected, but in view of the battle-cry of Benjamin in Hos. 5.8 (G. A. Smith, *The Twelve Prophets*, ad Hos. 5.8), the reading should be retained. *RSV* is certainly right in reading 'thy kinsmen' for *AV* 'with thee' (cf. *LXX<sup>A</sup>* and Lucian's recension), 'thy brother' for 'after thee', omitting one letter. For *amāmēkā* ('thy clansmen', or even 'the heads of thy clans') cf. Gen. 25.8. *am* denotes a tribal ancestor or senior relative and is also a term of respect in Arabic.

**Machir:** the oldest son of Manasseh according to Jos. 17.1-2 (on which see), and apparently his only son according to Num. 26.29, particularly associated with Gilead in both passages, but also with the central highlands of south Palestine about Shechem (see on Jos. 17.1-13). Probably the settlement of Machir in north Transjordan was later than it purports to be in Jos. 17, the tribe being apparently settled west of Jordan in the time of Deborah.

**commanders:** better 'law-givers' (see on verse 9).

**those who bear the marshal's staff:** the Hebrew verb *māšak* in this context is probably cognate with Arabic *mašaka*, 'to grasp, hold'. Here *sōpēr* is also genuine, but in the sense which it has in 2 Kg. 25.19, where it denotes the scribe who was connected with conscription. Qualification for military service may have been necessary for membership of the sacral assembly.

**15. the princes of Issachar came with Deborah:** so *RSV* after the Targum for M.T., 'and my princes among Issachar with Deborah'. From this passage it appears that Deborah was from Issachar, which suggests that the tradition which connects her with the 'palm of Deborah' in Benjamin in the hill-country of Ephraim (4.5) is secondary.

**and Issachar faithful to Barak:** reading *kēn l'ḥārāk* for M.T. *kēn bārāk*, taking *kēn* as an adjective 'true', as in Gen. 42.11, 19, 31, 33, 34; 2 Kg. 17.9; Prov. 15.7. The verse seems to contradict the tradition which associates Barak with Naphtali (4.6), and probably Naphtali should be read here, otherwise the tribe is not mentioned at all in connection with its representative at the tribal assembly (so S. R. Driver, G. A. Cooke, Gressmann, and Burney). Hertzberg (op. cit., p. 172) after Täubler suggests the reading 'As Deborah so Barak' and further that 'Naphtali' was inadvertently omitted at the end of the next clause owing to its resemblance to the first word of the next sentence, *bip'laggōt*. We prefer to read Naphtali for Issachar with *RSV*, Issachar being repeated possibly as a scribal inadvertency.

**into the valley they rushed forth at his heels:** better 'they streamed forth

- <sup>16</sup> Why did you tarry among the sheep-folds,  
to hear the piping for the flocks?  
Among the clans of Reuben  
there were great searchings of heart.
- <sup>17</sup> Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan;  
and Dan, why did he abide with the ships?  
Asher sat still at the coast of the sea,  
settling down by his landings.
- 

following him into the valley'—to the amphictyonic assembly, not to battle as RSV implies. This seems an odd colon wanting a parallel (which may have dropped out), but the versions give no clue to reconstruction.

**Among the clans of Reuben:** 'clans' (cf. 2 Chr. 35.5) is certainly to be preferred to AV 'watercourses' (cf. Ps. 1.3; Isa. 30.25; Job 20.17), the high plateau of Transjordan occupied by Reuben being particularly scarce in running waters.

**great searchings of heart:** (reading *hik'ré lēb* for M.T. *hik'kē lēb*). According to the feasible view of Weiser, the mention of the absent clans was designed to preserve the integrity of the assembly notwithstanding. Reuben is not, as is usually held, censured for absence, but excused. Exposed as they were to raiders from the desert, they might well be excused, though their absence was not without serious debate.

**16. among the sheepfolds:** (Hebrew *bēn ham-mišp'ṭayim*), actually 'between the converging fold-walls', as the dual *mišp'ṭayim* indicates. This feature is well illustrated in Transjordan in ancient drystone sheepfolds with converging foldwalls to facilitate the coralling of flocks in the event of sudden raids from the desert (A. S. Kirkbride, 'Desert Kites', JPOS XX, 1946, pp. 1-5); cf. the figurative description of Issachar 'between converging fold-walls', i.e. of the hills of lower Galilee and Gilboa, in Gen. 49.14 (Eissfeldt, 'Gabelhürden im Ostjordanland', F. und F. XXV, 1949, pp. 9-11). The feature is depicted on the early Egyptian Dynastic palette of Narmer, where two Semitic enemies of the Pharaoh flee naked, one from a walled perimeter with redoubts and the other from a circular corral with converging entry-walls (ANEP, p. 296).

**the piping for the flocks:** the 'whistling' (*š'rikôt*) may denote the controlling of the flock, which is still done by voice among Arab shepherds (cf. Jn 10.3f.). The explanation of Weiser notwithstanding, there is probably a gentle censure of Reuben and other absentees, with which the conduct of Naphtali and Zebulun is contrasted in verse 18.

**17. Gilead:** in the list of tribes we should expect Gad (so Syriac), though 'Gilead' has apparently a tribal significance in Jg. 11.1-2.

**and Dan, why did he abide by the ships?:** this is a very questionable reading. Two Hebrew mss. and the Vulgate omit 'Why?', but the main problem is the

<sup>18</sup> Zeb'ulun is a people that jeoparded their lives to the death;  
Naph'tali too, on the heights of the field.

<sup>19</sup> 'The kings came, they fought;  
then fought the kings of Canaan,  
at Ta'anach, by the waters of Megid'do;  
they got no spoils of silver.

reference to ships. Nötscher (op. cit., p. 24) explains the reference as indicating the employment of men of Dan, while still in the Shephelah, in ships or about the port of Jaffa. But still the phrase *yāghūr 'niyyōt* without the preposition before *'niyyōt* is suspect with this sense. We consider that the Rās Shamra Legend of Krt has suggested the solution. There, in a passage describing delay in attacking a city, it is said of the hero *gr'an'rm*, where we have taken *gr* as cognate with Hebrew *gūr* and *'an* as cognate with Arabic *'āna* ('to be at ease') (*The Krt Text in the Literature of Rās Shamra*, 2nd ed., 1964, p. 46), translating 'He abode, he was at ease at the city' (op. cit., p. 16). Hence we suggest the translation of the present passage 'and Dan abode at ease', omitting 'Why?' and taking *'niyyōt* ('ships'), perhaps vocalized differently, as an adverbial accusative.

**at the coast of the sea:** i.e. in the coastal plain of Acco.

**by his landings:** actually river-mouths, like the mouth of the Na'min near Acco, or perhaps bights in the broken rocky coastline from Acco northwards.

**18. Zebulun . . . Naphtali:** though the former and probably also the latter have already been mentioned in the roll-call of the sacral assembly at verses 14 and 15 respectively (reading 'Naphtali' for 'Issachar' in verse 15b, on which see), they are singled out again for special commendation in view of the transition to the hymn of praise celebrating the victory over Sisera (verses 19-30). Their courage is strikingly described as 'contempt of their life even to death' (RSV, 'jeoparded their lives to the death'). The verb *hērēp* signifies 'reproach' or 'belittling'. The expression, if possible, is strange, and Ball's suggested emendation of *hērēp* to *heh'rīm* ('devoted') may be seriously considered.

**on the heights of the field:** if the battle was fought on the slightly raised belt of basalt between the winter marshes of the Kishon near Megiddo (see on 4.7) the reference is perfectly intelligible. Alternatively, if the reference here is general, it may refer to the exploits of Naphtali in the hills of Galilee, specifically to the earlier victory over Jabin of Hazor at the Waters of Merom (Jos. 11.1-11).

#### THE HYMN OF PRAISE FOR THE VICTORY OVER SISERA 19-30

Naturally less circumstantial than the prose version in the general account of the campaign, the hymn admirably supplements that account by emphasizing certain

- <sup>20</sup> From heaven fought the stars,  
 from their courses they fought against Sis'era.  
<sup>21</sup> The torrent Kishon swept them away,  
 the onrushing torrent, the torrent Kishon.  
 March on, my soul, with might!

important details in the actual battle, such as the location 'at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo' (see on 4.7). In five staccato couplets (verses 19-22) the battle is described and the important fact emphasized that the rain and flood of the Kishon was a vital factor in the defeat and rout of the enemy. A curse on an unco-operative locality, Meroz (verse 23), introduces the blessing on Jael (verse 24), which leads to the account of her assassination of Sisera (verses 25-27), which is at the same time a taunt song (a feature of primitive Semitic war poetry) on the fall of the enemy by the hand of a woman. The taunt element is accentuated in verses 28-30, with the dramatic description of the vain expectation of Sisera's mother and her ladies.

#### *The Battle 19-22*

**19. the kings:** probably refers to Sisera and his allies, the local kings of neighbouring Canaanite cities, who are, however, unnamed; but it is at the same time a familiar motif in later liturgical poetry, which similarly poses the antithesis between human and divine authority (see on verse 3).

**at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo:** better 'by Taanach', a precise location of the battle (see on 4.7). After this statement Albright would date the battle and the poem rather precisely, assuming that Taanach was occupied and Megiddo was not, which generally accords with the history of those sites as demonstrated by archaeology, one being occupied while the other was abandoned (*The Archaeology of Palestine*, 1949, pp. 117-18). This is not strictly accurate, and in any case Albright surely presses a poetic statement too far, considering the exigencies of parallelism though with his general conclusion that the battle and the poem date to c. 1125 B.C. we have no argument.

**they got no spoils of silver:** Hebrew *beša'* means unlawful gain, violently extorted. The RSV interpretation is probably right, but it may be a contemptuous reference on the part of Israel to the exactions of the Canaanites from their Hebrew neighbours, who were treated as *habiru*, or underprivileged alien sojourners, who were open to exploitation or conscription, a status which the Hebrews still had in the time of Saul (1 Sam. 13).

- 20. From heaven fought the stars,  
 from their courses they fought against Sisera.**

So RSV, rightly arranging the couplet. The reference is to a rainstorm, the stars being a source of rain in the Rās Shamra myths. Albright finds a further reference to the 'eternal courses' of the stars, the disruption of which causes rainstorms, in his

- 22 'Then loud beat the horses' hoofs  
with the galloping, galloping of his steeds.
- 23 'Curse Meroz, says the angel of the LORD,  
curse bitterly its inhabitants,  
because they came not to the help of the LORD,  
to the help of the LORD against the mighty.

feasible emendation of Hab. 3.6 ('The Psalm of Habakkuk', *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy*, edited by H. H. Rowley, 1950, pp. 11, 12, 14, 15).

**21. the torrent Kishon:** RSV rightly renders 'torrent' (Hebrew *naḥal*), the Kishon in its upper course being indeed a seasonal wādi, which, however, rises quickly in its lower course, swollen by flash floods from the slopes of Carmel and the hills of lower Galilee as they converge upon it near Harosheth. In such conditions the current of heavy mud-laden water was strong enough to sweep away Sisera's chariotry, which was at a hopeless disadvantage in the marshy ground which then welled up by the basalt dam near Megiddo, and in flight westwards, where eventually the flooded Kishon 'headed them off' (so with a change of vowels for RSV 'the onrushing torrent'). For the verb *kiddēm* in the sense 'to intercept', cf. Job 3.12.

**March on, my soul, with might!** lit. 'thou shalt stamp, my soul, mightily', the final noun being adverbial accusative. The language is so strange as to warrant emendation, cf. Burney (op. cit., p. 148), 'Bless the might of Yahweh, O my soul', taking 'Yahweh' as omitted through the use of the single *yod* as an abbreviation after 'strength', and reading *bār'kēi* or *t'ḥār'kēi* for *tiḡr'kēi*. Weiser, however (op. cit., p. 91), defends the M.T., aptly citing the stamping of the feet as a gesture in the curse in Ezek. 6.11. The purpose also may be to accentuate the hoof-beats of the horses of the enemy in flight, which is onomatopoeically expressed in the sequel.

**22. loud beat the horses' hoofs:** in M.T. the final *m* of *sūsīm* has been inadvertently omitted before the initial *m* of the following word (haplography). **galloping:** the repetition of the trisyllabic noun with the accent on the final syllable produces a striking onomatopoeic effect, while the repetition conveys a quantitative impression.

**his steeds:** 'abbîrāyw, better 'stallions', from a root cognate with the Arabic verb 'abara 'to impregnate'. It is used of bulls in the Rās Shamra texts, but of chariot horses in Jer. 8.16, 47.3, 50.11.

### *The Curse on Meroz 23*

Suggested by the blessing on Jael, which introduces the latter part of the poem.

Meroz is unknown, possibly because it was a small Hebrew settlement like the



- <sup>24</sup> 'Most blessed of women be Ja'el,  
the wife of Heber the Ken'ite,  
of tent-dwelling women most blessed.
- <sup>25</sup> He asked water and she gave him milk,  
she brought him curds in a lordly bowl.
- <sup>26</sup> She put her hand to the tent peg  
and her right hand to the workmen's mallet;  
she struck Sis'era a blow,  
she crushed his head,  
she shattered and pierced his temple.

peasant settlements of the Early Iron Age noticed by Y. Aharoni in lower Galilee (*Antiquity and Survival*, II, 1957, pp. 142-50), which did not survive the curse laid upon it and all who should settle there (RSV 'its inhabitants'). The fact that it was expected to co-operate with the Israelites has been taken to indicate that it was an Israelite settlement (so O. Grether, *Das Deborahlied*, 1941, p. 47). Alt, however ('Meros', *KSI*, 1953, p. 275), suggests that it was a Canaanite settlement bordering on the great central plain near Taanach, which had been in alliance with Manasseh but had revoked the alliance in the campaign. It may have been one of the longer-established Hebrew communities more recently drawn into the confederacy and now formally expelled by the curse.

says the angel of the LORD: this is probably not original, as the metre suggests. Probably an internal accusative from the same root as 'Curse' was used, qualified by 'Yahweh'—'Curse Meroz with the curse of Yahweh'—which was then corrupted to 'said' with the later addition of 'the angel'.

to the help of the LORD: the war of 'the people of Yahweh', which according to the conception in ancient Israel was represented in any one of its members, was Yahweh's war. The curse on those who ignore the call to war is cited in Jer. 48.10.

*Blessing is pronounced on Jael 24*

Jael . . . the wife of Heber the Kenite: see on 4.11, 17.

*Jael's Assassination of Sisera 25-27*

For similarities and divergences of detail, see on prose version, 4.17-22. The haste of Sisera and quick response of Jael are well expressed in two couplets, each of two stressed syllables with an economy of conjunctions and subordinate clauses.

**25. curds:** the regular drink of the shepherd (cf. Isa. 7.15-22, and see on 4.19). **a lordly bowl:** lit. 'a shallow bowl fit for nobles'. A similar qualification is found in the Rās Shamra myths.

**26. workmen's mallet:** (Hebrew *halmūt*; cf. *maḳḳēbet*, 4.21). The Targum is

- 27 He sank, he fell,  
     he lay still at her feet;  
 at her feet he sank, he fell;  
     where he sank, there he fell dead.
- 28 'Out of the window she peered,  
     the mother of Sis'era gazed through the lattice:  
 "Why is his chariot so long in coming?  
     Why tarry the hoofbeats of his chariots?"

probably right in taking it as a smith's implement, the Kenites being a smith caste. There may be an intended contrast between this tool and a warrior's weapon, which would have made a more dignified end for Sisera. The verb *tišlahnāh* is taken as singular by RSV, pointing *tišlāhennāh* ('she stretched it forth', taking 'her hand' proleptically).

**shattered:** (Hebrew *māh'šāh*). Common in this sense in the Rās Shamra myths. This verse reflects the fusion of two variant traditions, that Jael felled Sisera while he stood stooping and drinking the curds and the other that she drove the tent peg through his temples while he lay asleep.

**pierced:** cf. Job 20.24; 'passed on, or from one side to another'. The verb *hālap* is cognate with Arabic *halafa* ('to succeed'), whence Khalīf ('Caliph').

**27. he sank:** (Hebrew *kāra*). Visualizes the knees giving; cf. *birkayim kōr'ōt* ('tottering knees'), Job 4.4. Sisera is visualized as struck while he was still on his feet, as also by 'he fell'.

**dead:** (Hebrew *šādāq*). Lit. 'devastated'; so Driver's 'undone'. The repetition of the words indicates the finality of the action.

### The Taunt Song 28-30

Here the writer adapts the theme of the women who welcome back the victor with triumph-songs (1 Sam. 18.6-7; cf. Exod. 15.20-22).

**28. the mother of Sisera:** as in the Hebrew monarchy, the mother of the king, and not one of his many wives, was the first lady (Hebrew *hag-g'birāh*) (cf. 1 Kg. 15.13; 2 Kg. 10.13). This seems also to have been the convention among the Canaanites and Amorites in north Syria in the 14th century B.C., where a princess of the house of Amurru is termed 'the Great Lady' (*rabītu*).

**gazed:** i.e. 'looked attentively'; so RSV after LXX<sup>a</sup> and Lucian's recension and the Hexaplar Syriac. AV 'cried' as a rendering of the verb *yābāb*, unattested in the Old Testament, is supported by the Aramaic and Syriac verb meaning 'to sound a trumpet' or 'cry'. The parallelism supports RSV.

**lattice:** to admit air without too much light, and to preserve the privacy of the harem.

- <sup>29</sup> Her wisest ladies make answer,  
     nay, she gives answer to herself,  
<sup>30</sup> "Are they not finding and dividing the spoil?—  
     A maiden or two for every man;  
     spoil of dyed stuffs for Sis'era,  
     spoil of dyed stuffs embroidered,  
     two pieces of dyed work embroidered for my neck as spoil?"

hoofbeats: so correctly RSV (cf. AV 'wheels').

**29. her wisest ladies:** better 'the wisest of her princesses', either plural as in M.T., or singular as in the Syriac and Vulgate versions. The princesses (*šārôt*) are the harem of Sisera under the surveillance of the queen mother, Sisera being thus a king and not a mere lieutenant of Jabin of Hazor. 'Wise' here, as often, means 'shrewd'.

**30. Are they not finding and dividing the spoil?:** note the descriptive imperfect, used in the dramatic Rās Shamra myths and legends. 'Find' (*māšā*) often means 'light upon' in the Old Testament. The imperfects and the staccato arrangement of eight words in two couplets, each of two stressed syllables, as in verse 25, convey the urgency and excitement of the questions, and the vivid imagination of the speaker, as well as the swift, ruthless action of the spoilers, which from the point of view of the speaker was not yet completed.

**A maiden or two for every man:** lit. 'a womb, two wombs to (each) head of a man'. The allusion is to the fate of captive girls, which was concubinage. The inscription of Mesha of Moab employs the same figure (G. A. Cooke, *NSI* 1, l. 17).

**30b-c.** The couplet probably contains dittographs and displacements and subsequent corruptions, and the most feasible reconstruction out of the component parts, which conforms to the pattern of the description of the booty in verse 30a, is that of Budde:

šēlal šēhā'im l'šis'ra'  
 rikmah rikmāṭayim l'šawwā'rē

Spoil of pieces of dyed stuff for Sisera,  
 A piece or two of embroidery for my neck.

Alternatively, we might suggest retaining the second *šēhā'im* of M.T., the repetition indicating abundance, and reading with Ewald *l'šaww"rē šēgāl*, 'for the neck of the queen' for M.T. *l'šaww"rē šālāl*:

šēlal šēhā'im šēhā'im l'šis'ra'  
 rikmah rikmāṭayim l'šaww"rē šēgāl

<sup>31</sup> 'So perish all thine enemies, O LORD!  
But thy friends be like the sun as he rises in his might.'

And the land had rest for forty years.

**6** The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD;  
and the LORD gave them into the hand of Mid'ian seven years.  
<sup>2</sup> And the hand of Mid'ian prevailed over Israel; and because of  
Mid'ian the people of Israel made for themselves the dens which are

Spoil of much dyed stuff for Sisera,  
A piece or two of embroidery for the neck of the queen.

### *Final Imprecation and Blessing 31*

Note the sudden address to Yahweh, indicating that verse 31 is independent of the poem in verses 19-30. The passage reflects the consciousness of the consequences in  blessing and curse of being in or out of the Covenant-community, more strikingly expressed in the Decalogue (Exod. 20.5-6).

**31b.** Deuteronomic chronological note, withheld from the end of the prose account of the campaign in chapter 4.

### THE GIDEON CYCLE 6.1-8.32

For literary analysis, see Introduction, pp. 222-229.

### *Introductory Framework 6.1-6*

The introductory framework to the narrative of deliverance through Gideon (verses 1, 6b) is here elaborated by historical details (verses 2-6a).

**1. Midian:** the designation both of a people akin to the Hebrews (Gen. 25.1-2) and a locality in the hinterland of 'Aqaba (1 Kg. 11.18), where the name survived in a settlement noted by the Arab geographer Idrisi five days' journey from 'Aqaba. This region may have been the proper home and cult-centre of the Midianites, but they ranged into Sinai, where the Hebrews were associated with one of their clans in the time of Moses (Exod. 3.18). Their aggression in the time of Gideon may be connected with the domestication of the camel (cf. verse 5), unattested in the Assyrian inscriptions before the twelfth century B.C., as Albright has noted (*Archaeology of Palestine*, 1949, pp. 206-07), and with the general Aramaean influx from the north Arabian desert to Syria, as seems implied in 'the people of the East' (verse 3).

**2. dens:** (Hebrew *minhārôt*). This is a *hapax legomenon* in the Old Testament, and is possibly explained in the following word, 'caves', in which case it may be cognate

in the mountains, and the caves and the strongholds. <sup>3</sup> For whenever the Israelites put in seed the Mid'ianites and the Amal'ekites and the people of the East would come up and attack them; <sup>4</sup> they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the land, as far as the neighbourhood of Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel, and no sheep or ox or ass. <sup>5</sup> For they would come up with their cattle and their tents, coming like locusts for number; both they and their camels could not be counted; so that they wasted the land as they came in. <sup>6</sup> And Israel was brought very low because of Mid'ian; and the people of Israel cried for help to the LORD.

7 When the people of Israel cried to the LORD on account of the

with the Arabic *minhāra*, 'a place hollowed out by water', though this denotes a water-course rather than stagnant water. Another possibility is that the word is connected with the root *nāhar* ('to shine') (Ps. 34.5, (M.T. 6); Isa. 60.5; Job 3.4), and denotes 'beacon-posts'. The whole situation is paralleled in periodic Bedouin raids till as late as the early days of the British Mandate, in face of which there were regular watchers of crops and signal stations on prominent hills. 'The mountains' seem to imply by contrast cultivable plains and valleys, which were often at some distance from hill-top villages.

3. Note the frequentative tense of the verbs.

the Amalekites: see on 3.13.

4. as far as the neighbourhood of Gaza: if this is related to the Israelite settlement, in the original tradition it probably denoted rather the western foothills of Israel and Judah flanking the road through the coastal plain to Gaza, as the M.T. suggests 'until thou comest to Gaza'.

5. like locusts for number: a common hyperbole in the Old Testament (cf. 7.12). See C. S. Jarvis's description of a locust swarm in Sinai 'ten miles deep, length unknown, but definitely over twenty miles' (*Three Deserts*, 1936, p. 217). In respect of the origin of locusts in the desert as well as in their disastrous effect (cf. Jl 2.3), and the black goat-hair tents covering the land, this is an apt description of Bedouin raids.

6. The entirely helpless and defensive attitude of Israel introduces the manifestation of the power and grace of God in the sequel.

7-10. A prophetic rebuke reflecting the framework of the pre-Deuteronomic collection of the narratives of the 'great judges' in the pattern of God's contention with his covenanted community in the sacral assembly on the grounds of their infringement of his sovereign claim to their exclusive allegiance, to which his Great Deliverance entitles him. The passage is a late insertion in the Gideon tradition, as is indicated by the repetition of verse 6b at verse 7a, and by the



Mid'ianites, <sup>8</sup> the LORD sent a prophet to the people of Israel; and he said to them, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I led you up from Egypt, and brought you out of the house of bondage; <sup>9</sup> and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you, and gave you their land; <sup>10</sup> and I said to you, "I am the LORD your God; you shall not pay reverence to the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not given heed to my voice.'

11 Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak at Ophrah, which belonged to Jo'ash the Abiez'rite, as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press, to hide it from the Mid'ian-

irrelevance of the assurance not to fear the gods of the Amorites (verse 10) to the context on the Midianite war (see further, W. Beyerlin, 'Geschichte und Heilsgeschichtliche Traditionsbildung im Alten Testament', VT XIII, 1963, pp. 10ff., and Introduction, pp. 208f.).

**8. a prophet:** lit 'a man, a prophet', visualizes such a figure as Elijah was later in Ahab's time. It is the first appearance of such a figure in the history of Israel, and may be a fiction of the Deuteronomic compiler, as the mouthpiece of the historical convention of the divine contention, which he elaborates (but see Introduction, p. 223).

**11-24. THE CALL OF GIDEON** is a composite narrative, consisting of the tradition of Gideon's call (verses 11-17, continued at verses 36-40) and the aetiological legend of the foundation of the altar of 'the Lord is Peace' (verse 24) at Ophrah (verses 19-24), verse 18 being editorial. Common to both and facilitating the fusion is the element of the theophany. See further, Introduction, pp. 223f.

### *The Call of Gideon 11-17*

**11. the angel of the LORD:** cf. verses 14, 16, 23, where Gideon's interlocutor is Yahweh himself. The angel, or bearer of God's message, was here in human form and was not immediately recognized by Gideon. Doubtless human associates who raised scruples and were instrumental in nerving a man's holy resolve were so understood, and the encounter with the angel of the Lord might even be the personification of a man's spiritual conflict when faced by what he recognized as a divine challenge.

**the oak:** (Hebrew 'ēlāh). Actually 'terebinth', a conspicuous tree which, like so many in Syria and Palestine, was anciently regarded as the abode of a local numen or wēli.

**which belonged to Joash:** possibly indicates that Joash was the custodian of the sacred tree.

ites.<sup>12</sup> And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, 'The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valour.'<sup>13</sup> And Gideon said to him, 'Pray, sir, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this befallen us? And where are all his wonderful deeds which our fathers recounted to us, saying, "Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?" But now the LORD has cast us off, and given us into the hand of Mid'ian.'<sup>14</sup> And the LORD turned to him and said, 'Go in this might

**Ophrah:** in this case in Manasseh, hence not the Ophrah of Jos. 18.23 (possibly *et-Tayibeh*, c. 4 miles N. of Bethel), which was in Benjamin. This necessitated the qualification of Gideon's Ophrah as 'of Abiezer' (verse 24). The name is probably originally a common noun signifying, as the Arabic cognate suggests, 'the ash-coloured place'. The home of Gideon's concubine at Shechem (8.31) and the incident of Jotham (9.6ff.) point to a place near Shechem, which, however, cannot be certainly located.

**the Abiezrite:** Abiezer was a clan of the tribe of Manasseh (Jos. 17.2).

**beating out wheat in the wine press:** i.e. with a flail, or even a stick, which was used for threshing out small quantities (cf. Ru. 2.17), when the normal threshing with ox and sledge on the exposed threshing-floor would have been too conspicuous. If *gat* has the usual meaning of wine press, a rock-cut depression is visualized for trampling the grapes, communicating with a deeper vat (*yekeb*) for collecting the juice. But in administrative texts from the palace of Rās Shamra, *gt* signifies a piece of land, probably a feudal holding, so the present passage may signify that Gideon was venturing to thresh on his own plot and not on the public threshing-floor. This, however, is uncertain, and the meaning is probably that Gideon was threshing his corn in small quantities, not *in*, but *by* the wine press, where he might hide what he had threshed.

**to hide it:** lit. 'to cause to flee'; better 'to save it'.

**12. The LORD is with you:** benediction in the name of God is still an Arab greeting. In his reply Gideon shows his concern for present problems in his expressed awareness of the paradox—which is shared by the Deuteronomic historian—between the Drama of Salvation and the inheritance of the Promised Land and the forfeited favour of God (cf. Ps. 44).

**mighty man of valour:** a technical term for a freeman of substance or land whose status made him liable for military service; hence it often means 'a warrior'. It has secondarily a moral connotation and has been comprehensively defined as 'a gentleman and one expected to behave as such'.

**13. Pray, sir:** lit. 'By thy leave, my lord!' Hebrew *bî* is probably the imperative of 'āḥāh ('to be willing') with the survival of the original final consonant (A. M. Honeyman, JAOS LXIV, 1944, pp. 81ff.).

**14. the LORD turned to him:** cf. LXX 'the angel of the Lord . . .' (see on verse 11).

of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Mid'ian; do not I send you?' <sup>15</sup>And he said to him, 'Pray, LORD, how can I deliver Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manas'seh, and I am the least in my family.' <sup>16</sup>And the LORD said to him, 'But I will be with you, and you shall smite the Mid'ianites as one man.' <sup>17</sup>And he said to him, 'If now I have found favour with thee, then show me a sign that it is thou who speakest with me. <sup>18</sup>Do not depart from here, I pray thee, until I come to thee, and bring out my present, and set it before thee.' And he said, 'I will stay till you return.'

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**in this might of yours:** possibly refers to the courage of Gideon in having secured a harvest in spite of Midianite raids, and in venturing to thresh it, or it may refer to his strength of character in questioning the conventional greeting and showing his awareness that the troubles indicated an estrangement between God and Israel according to the solemn warning in the adjurations to the Covenant-sacrament. Gideon was thus a fit instrument in the rehabilitation of the people of God.

**deliver:** (Hebrew *w'hôš'a'îā*). The verb is here used in its original physical sense 'to make room for, relieve from restrictions', as the Arabic cognate indicates.

**do not I send you?:** better 'Have not I sent you?' This surely discloses the Lord in the speaker, as is appreciated by the Massoretes, who depict Gideon as now addressing his interlocutor not as 'Sir' but as 'My Lord' (verse 15); cf. the topographical tradition in verses 19-24, where Gideon recognizes the presence of God only after the phenomenon of the fire (verse 22).

**15. the weakest . . . the least:** that the saviour should be of such unpromising origins is a common motif of saga and folk-tale. In the collection of the traditions of the judges it enhances the power and grace of God in his deliverance.

**16. But I will be with you:** so God reassures Moses (Exod. 3.12, E). Note the adversative particle in response to the diffidence of Gideon.

**17. show me a sign:** this anticipates the passage verses 36-40 (the fleece and the dew), which also belongs to the tradition of Gideon's call (cf. the authenticating signs at Moses' call, Exod. 4). The 'sign', or manifestation of the ultimate power of God in the world of sensible phenomena, authenticates a practical divine command. The phenomenon was often quite natural, miraculous only in respect of coincidence, but in view of the supernatural power so authenticated it tended to be related, especially in saga, as also supernatural.

**18.** This connects with the incident of the food-offering in the tradition of the theophany which authenticates the cult-place of 'the Lord is Peace' at Ophrah (verses 19-24), and is probably editorial.

**my present:** (Hebrew *minhātī*). This is ambiguous, the noun signifying both a present (Gen. 32.13, 18, 20, 21, M.T. 14, 19, 21, 22; 33.10, 43.11-15, 25, 26),

19 So Gideon went into his house and prepared a kid, and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour; the meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the oak and presented them.<sup>20</sup> And the angel of God said to him, 'Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them.' And he did so.<sup>21</sup> Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes; and there sprang up fire from the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight.<sup>22</sup> Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD; and Gideon said, 'Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face.'<sup>23</sup> But the LORD said to him, 'Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall not die.'<sup>24</sup> Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it, The LORD is peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiez'rites.

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whereby two parties are associated, and a sacrificial offering. Here the term is probably intentionally ambiguous at this stage, the meal becoming a sacrifice in verse 21.

*The Theophany authenticating the Cult-place of 'the Lord is Peace' 19-24*

**19. a kid:** lit. 'a kid of the goats'; cf. Manoah's offering at the theophany at Zorah (13.15, 19).

**unleavened cakes:** possibly secondary, definitely implying a sacrifice, indicated by the large quantity of flour, an **ephah**, i.e. about a bushel, by the Levitical prescription of unleavened bread with sacrifice (Lev. 2.4), and by the final verb (*wayyaggaš*), which has the connotation of offering sacrifice (*var. lect.* LXXA, 'he did obeisance').

**21. fire from the rock:** fire is the conventional token of the theophany (cf. Exod. 3.2-6; Lev. 9.24; 1 Kg. 18).

**22. Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face:** a common conception in ancient Israel (cf. 13.22; Exod. 3.6, the theophany to Moses; 33.20, 23), which probably eventually suggested the use of incense to preserve the conception of the *deus absconditus* in the Temple (Isa. 6.4; Lev. 16.12-13).

**24. The LORD is peace:** the name of the altar at Ophrah is suggested by the words of the divine assurance (verse 23), or rather, the story of the divine assurance was prompted in explanation of the name of the cult-place.

**To this day:** indicates the nature of the tradition as aetiological legend.

25 That night the LORD said to him, 'Take your father's bull, the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Ba'al which your father has, and cut down the Ashe'rah that is beside it; <sup>26</sup> and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of the stronghold here, with stones laid in due order; then take the second bull, and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Ashe'rah which you shall cut down.' <sup>27</sup> So Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had told him; but because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

28 When the men of the town rose early in the morning, behold,

*The Destruction of the Altar of Baal in Ophrah 25-32*

This is an aetiological legend, perhaps reflecting the appropriation of a Canaanite cult-place for Yahweh (see Introduction, p. 224).

**25. That night:** it is impossible to determine whether this is editorial or part of the original tradition.

**your father's bull, the second bull:** the text here is obviously corrupt, nor do the versions give any help. The text should be restored after verse 27, where the instructions are carried out. There, an item of vital importance is 'ten men of his servants' (so Gressmann, Burney, and others after Kuenen). Hence we should probably read 'Take ten men of your father's servants and a seven-year-old bull'. 'Second' (Hebrew *šēnī* in the M.T.), which disrupts the grammar in verse 25, is introduced here and at verse 28 after the corruption of the original text, and may be a corruption of an original *šāmēn* ('fat'). Perhaps verse 25a originally contained a reference to Gideon's servant Purah, which was corrupted to *par* ('bull').

**the altar of Baal which your father has:** grammatically either the altar or the baal might pertain to the hero's father. If the former, he might be the custodian, as of the sacred terebinth in verse 11, and we consider this probable. In view of the public interest in this hill-top sanctuary it is unlikely that the reference is to a private cult of a local numen by the father of Gideon, the example of Micah (chapter 17) notwithstanding.

**cut down the Asherah:** the verb indicates that the Asherah was a standing wooden object, a tree natural or stylized, representing the tree of life, symbolizing the mother goddess Asherah, as in Canaanite art (see on 3.7).

**26. the stronghold:** a prominent feature, a high rock; cf. 'a rock of the fortress' in Isa. 17.10; Ps. 31.2 (M.T. 3), which served as a citadel of the settlement. A different cult-place is visualized from the holy rock in the less conspicuous vineyard (verses 11-24).

**in due order:** the language is technical (cf. Num. 23.4), here referring to the



the altar of Ba'al was broken down, and the Ashe'rah beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered upon the altar which had been built. <sup>29</sup>And they said to one another, 'Who has done this thing?' And after they had made search and inquired, they said, 'Gideon the son of Jo'ash has done this thing.' <sup>30</sup>Then the men of the town said to Jo'ash, 'Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has pulled down the altar of Ba'al and cut down the Ashe'rah beside it.' <sup>31</sup>But Jo'ash said to all who were arrayed against him, 'Will you contend for Ba'al? Or will you defend his cause? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been pulled down.' <sup>32</sup>Therefore on that day he was called Jerub-ba'al, that is to say, 'Let Ba'al contend against him,' because he pulled down his altar.

<sup>33</sup>Then all the Mid'ianites and the Amal'ekites and the people of the East came together, and crossing the Jordan they encamped in the Valley of Jezre'el. <sup>34</sup>But the Spirit of the LORD took possession of

courses of stones, which, rather than a casual agglomeration of stones or earth, would indicate Gideon's *fait accompli* of the destruction of the Baal altar and his dedication of an entirely new one.

**31. Will you contend for Baal? Or will you defend his cause?:** the specific use of the personal pronouns in M.T. suggests their emphasis. The challenge of Joash with the threat of death to any who would contend for Baal, if this is original, indicates his local authority and also the fact that, though the traditional fertility-cult was practised, it was incompatible with the official Yahweh cult of the sacral confederacy of Israel. RSV 'defend his cause' might better be translated 'effect relief for' (*tôšî'ân*) (see on verse 14).

**If he is a god, let him contend for himself:** cf. the irony of Elijah at a similar juncture.

### *Gideon's Rally against the Midianites 33-35*

This is in the great central plain and forms a historical narrative (see Introduction, pp. 224f.).

This was primarily, and perhaps solely, addressed to Gideon's own clan of Abiezer. The association of Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali may be secondary, but in view of the action in their vicinity, they may have been notified with a view to the provisioning of Gideon's force and the exploitation of the victory (cf. 7.23). The narrative is continued in 7.1. Gideon's moment of decision to act is marked by his 'investment' with the spirit of Yahweh, on which see 3.10. The particular

Gideon; and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiez'rites were called out to follow him.<sup>35</sup> And he sent messengers throughout all Manas'seh: and they too were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to Asher, Zeb'ulun, and Naph'tali; and they went up to meet them.

36 Then Gideon said to God, 'If thou wilt deliver Israel by my hand, as thou hast said,<sup>37</sup> behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that thou wilt deliver Israel by my hand, as thou hast said.'<sup>38</sup> And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water.<sup>39</sup> Then Gideon said to God, 'Let not thy anger burn against me, let me speak but this once; pray, let me make trial only this once with the fleece; pray, let it be dry only on the fleece, and on all the ground let there be dew.'<sup>40</sup> And God did so that night; for it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.

verb, lit. 'clothed' (verse 34) is rare in connection with possession by the spirit (cf. 2 Chr. 24.20), and may imply general recognition of Gideon's authority as the distinctive robes or armour of the kings of Israel in 1 Kg. 22.10, where the passive participle of the same verb is used absolutely.

#### *The Sign of the Fleece and the Dew 36-40*

The conclusion of the story of the call of Gideon (verses 11-17) (see Introduction, pp. 223f.).

This does not concern the moment opportune for attack as the present context implies, but the authentication of Gideon's call (verses 11-17). It may be compared with the signs of the serpent and leprosy in the call of Moses (Exod. 4.1-7), and here too the phenomenon and its reverse constitute the sign.

36. **God**, rather than 'Yahweh', is distinctive of this passage, and may indicate a different version of Gideon's call from the theophany in verses 11-17, where the angel of God is evidently addressed as 'my Lord'.

37. **a fleece of wool**: lit. 'a clipping of wool', but a single fleece as the bowlful of water indicates. The dew would soon evaporate from the rock or beaten earth of the threshing-floor, and this is no miracle. But the reverse would certainly be a miracle, belonging to the very stuff of saga, and so serving the purpose of the collector to emphasize the power of God in Gideon's enterprise.

7 Then Jerubba'al (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod; and the camp of Mid'ian was north of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2 The LORD said to Gideon, 'The people with you are too many for me to give the Mid'ianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, "My own hand has delivered me."<sup>3</sup> Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, "Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home." And Gideon tested them; twenty-two thousand returned, and ten thousand remained.

### *Gideon's Campaign against Midian 7.1-25*

A historical tradition, continued from 6.33-35.

1. **the spring of Harod:** only mentioned here, it is one of the springs of Nahr Jālūd at the foot of Gilboa, probably 'Ain Jālūd itself.

**the hill of Moreh:** probably Jebel ed-Dahī, an outlier of the Galilean foothills (c. 4 miles N. of 'Ain Jālūd).

### *The Reduction of Gideon's Force 2-8*

Either an expedient to discard the help of all but his picked commandos without giving offence, or a literary device to reconcile the original tradition of the exploit of Gideon and Abiezer (cf. 8.2) with the amphictyonic tradition of the victory of all Israel (see Introduction, pp. 224f.). It presupposes, however, Gideon's summons to the tribes about the great central plain (verses 34-35), which was a practical measure. From the dream of the Midianites (verse 13) it is apparent that Gideon's concentration was no secret to the enemy. Even though he had been determined to make a night attack with a small commando force, it would still have been good tactics to keep the enemy apprehensive of hostility and potential attack from all directions.

2. **lest Israel vaunt themselves:** probably a theologoumenon of the collector.

3. **trembling:** (Hebrew *hārēḏ*). Perhaps the relic of a popular etymology of the place-name Harod.

**And Gideon tested them:** so RSV, reading *wayyisr' pēm giḏ'ōn* for M.T. *w'yisṣōr mēhar hag-gil'ād* (AV 'and let him depart early from Mount Gilead), which is highly suspect. If a mountain is denoted, Gilboa rather than Gilead in Transjordan would be most natural. Alternatively we might suggest the reading *w'yisṣeh mēhar hag-gilbōa'* ('and let him keep watch from Mount Gilboa'), or, closer to the M.T., *w'yisṣāḥēr b'har hag-gilbōa'* ('and let him concentrate on Mount Gilboa'). If Gilead of M.T. must be read, the reference, assuming one of the last two alternatives, may

4 And the LORD said to Gideon, 'The people are still too many; take them down to the water and I will test them for you there; and he of whom I say to you, "This man shall go with you," shall go with you; and any of whom I say to you, "This man shall not go with you," shall not go.' <sup>5</sup> So he brought the people down to the water; and the LORD said to Gideon, 'Every one that laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself; likewise every one that kneels down to drink.' <sup>6</sup> And the number of those that lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people knelt down to drink water. <sup>7</sup> And the LORD said to Gideon, 'With the three hundred men that lapped I will deliver you, and give the Mid'ianites into your hand; and let all the others go every man to his home.' <sup>8</sup> So he took the jars of the people

have been to anticipate the sequel to the rout of the Midianite by the east, as actually materialized (verses 24-25).

4-7. The test is generally taken as designed to determine the vigilance of those who scooped water up with their hand as they knelt, but the difficulty is that in verses 6 and 7 it is repeated that those chosen were those who lapped and it is specifically stated that the majority knelt. The matter is complicated by the statement that those who lapped, like a dog (verse 5), put their hand to their mouth (verse 6). 'With their hand to their mouth' seems obviously displaced from the end of verse 7 ('... knelt down to drink water'). The test was not to determine something which Gideon did not already know. We submit that he had already determined upon tactics such as he actually employed, and had picked his commandos of three groups of a hundred (verse 16) from his own clan of Abiezer (cf. 8.2). The 'test' then, probably pre-concerted, was designed to obviate inconveniently large numbers and to reserve volunteers from other tribes without giving offence, which in such circumstances was too easily taken (cf. verses 24-25; 12.1-6). Those who drank, or apparently intended to, in the more unusual manner were chosen. That was, lying down and drinking directly from the water as a dog drinks. J. N. Schofield (*Peake's Commentary*, rev. ed., 1962, p. 309) rightly emphasizes the danger of leeches, and in drinking directly from a stream the writer has often followed his Arab companions in sucking the water through a head-cloth. Practically this 'test' solved Gideon's problem; theologically it served the compiler's purpose in minimizing the part of man in the victory, which was God's.



4. and I will test them: better, 'that I may sort them out' (*w'ēšr'pēm*), i.e. as a goldsmith assays pure metal.

8. So he took the jars of the people from their hands: so RSV, reading

from their hands, and their trumpets; and he sent all the rest of Israel every man to his tent, but retained the three hundred men; and the camp of Mid'ian was below him in the valley.

9 That same night the LORD said to him, 'Arise, go down against the camp; for I have given it into your hand.<sup>10</sup> But if you fear to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant;<sup>11</sup> and you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.' Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outposts of the armed men that were in the camp.<sup>12</sup> And the Mid'ianites and the Amal'ekites and all the people of the East lay along the valley like locusts for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand which is upon the seashore for multitude.<sup>13</sup> When Gideon came, behold, a man was telling a dream to his comrade; and he said, 'Behold, I dreamed a dream; and lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Mid'ian, and came to the tent, and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside

*wayyikkəḥ 'et-kaddē hā-'ām miyyāḏām* for M.T. *wayyik'ḥū 'et-šēdāh hā-'ām b'ḡāḏām* (AV 'and the people took provisions in their hand'). The M.T. signifies that the main body (*hā-'ām*) played the part which Gideon had determined, namely to supply provisions for his commandos; the RSV reading, which is conjectural, explains how the striking-force had so many jars. The collocation of 'the trumpets' indicates that this is the correct reading.

#### *Gideon's Reconnaissance 9-14*

**10. But if you fear to go down:** Gideon's 'fear' was rather anxiety as to whether the moment or the mood of his men was opportune for the night attack he had planned. By his reconnaissance of the psychological rather than the tactical disposition of the enemy he confirms his own resolution and secures an auspicious sign to strengthen the morale of his commandos and authenticate the divine oracle which had prompted him to attack (verse 9).

**11. the outposts of the armed men:** lit. 'the extremity . . .', to test the adequacy of the armed guard in view of the intended distribution of his striking-force.

**13. a cake:** (Hebrew *š'fīl*, a *hapax legomenon* in the Old Testament). It is possibly cognate with an Arabic word *ṣalla* signifying a dry, consistent substance, like leather or baked earth; an apt description of bread baked in the ashes, as the Old Latin versions render.

**tumbled:** 'came turning over'.



down, so that the tent lay flat.' <sup>14</sup>And his comrade answered, 'This is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Jo'ash, a man of Israel; into his hand God has given Mid'ian and all the host.'

<sup>15</sup> When Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshipped; and he returned to the camp of Israel, and said, 'Arise; for the LORD has given the host of Mid'ian into your hand.' <sup>16</sup>And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and put trumpets into the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars. <sup>17</sup>And he said to them, 'Look at me, and do likewise; when I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do. <sup>18</sup> When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and shout, "For the LORD and for Gideon."'

<sup>19</sup> So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when

**14.** Taking the barley cake as emblematic of the Israelite peasantry and the tent of the nomad Midianites, the Midianite betrays his apprehension and the disposition of the enemy to leave the initiative to the Israelites, and gives the latter the auspicious sign they require. 'Into his hand God has given Midian . . .' rather reflects the free narrative of the compiler than the speech of the Midianite.

#### *Gideon's Preparation for Action 15-18*

Apparently a composite tradition, to judge from the narrative of the action in verses 19-22. In verses 15-18, when Gideon blows the trumpet the others are to sound a blast and shout 'For the Lord and for Gideon', but in verse 18 there is no mention of the jars and torches mentioned in verse 16, which play an essential part in the attack in verses 19-20, where another indication of the composite tradition is the war-cry, 'A sword for the Lord and for Gideon.' It may be that verses 15-18 originally knew nothing of the stratagem of the jars and torches, which were mentioned secondarily in verse 16 by a harmonizing editor.

**15. worshipped:** rather 'did obeisance', accepting the divine oracle communicated in the conventional form of the oracle in the tradition of the holy war (cf. 1.2, 4.7).

**16. three companies:** lit. 'heads', distributed round the enemy, as explicitly stated in verse 18; cf. Saul's strategy against the Ammonites, also in a night attack (1 Sam. 11.11). The torches would be of a smouldering substance which would blaze out when waved in the air. For a precise analogy, see Burney (op. cit., p. 216), cited from Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, 1890, p. 120.

they had just set the watch; and they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands. <sup>20</sup>And the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars, holding in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow; and they cried, 'A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!' <sup>21</sup>They stood every man in his place round about the camp, and all the army ran; they cried out and fled. <sup>22</sup>When they blew the three hundred trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow and against all the army; and the army fled as far as Beth-shit'tah toward Zer'erah, as far as the border of A'bel-meho'lah, by Tabbath. <sup>23</sup>And the men of Israel were called out from Naph'tali and from Asher and from all Manas'seh, and they pursued after Mid'ian.

24 And Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of

*The Assault, a Composite Tradition 19-22 (see on verses 15-18)*

**19. at the beginning of the middle watch:** the night was divided into three watches of four hours each, so that the attack was made between 10 and 11 p.m., before the relief sentries became accustomed to local features in the darkness.

**21-22.** Apart from the war-cry the only mention of weapons refers to the swords of the enemy. The original tradition probably implied that the Israelites drew their swords after the alarm with the jars and torches and/or the trumpets, but in the extant version only the tumult and shouting and the panic of the Midianites is mentioned, the Israelites standing 'every man in his place round about the camp' (verse 21). The activity of God is thus emphasized, as in the fall of Jericho.

**21. all the army ran:** perhaps, with a slight change of consonants, 'awoke' (so Moore).

**they cried and fled:** so RSV, after K<sup>c</sup>rê, LXX, Syriac, and Targum, for K<sup>c</sup>řib 'they put [them] to flight'.

**22. Beth-shittah:** 'the House of the Acacia'; may have left its name in the small Arab village of Shaṭṭah, c. 4½ miles NW. of Bethshan. **Abel-meholah** is probably Tell Abū Sifri, c. 10 miles S. of Bethshan (1 Kg. 4.12). **'Zererah'** (M.T. *š'ērāṭāh*, 'to Z.') may be a corruption of Zarethan in the Jordan valley (1 Kg. 7.46), just beyond Abel-meholah. **Tabbath** is quite unknown, but in view of Gideon's pursuit beyond Jordan (verse 25) a locality Rās Abū Ṭābāt below 'Ajlūn is not excluded.

*The Pursuit 23-25*

**23. Naphtali . . . Asher . . . and Manasseh** join in the rout; cf. 6.33-35, where Zebulun is included.

**24. Ephraim** is enlisted to seize the watering-places on the Midian line of flight, probably where the Wādī Fār'a joins the Jordan, where **Beth-barah** may be located.

E'phraim, saying, 'Come down against the Mid'ianites and seize the waters against them, as far as Beth-bar'ah, and also the Jordan.' So all the men of E'phraim were called out, and they seized the waters as far as Beth-bar'ah, and also the Jordan. <sup>25</sup>And they took the two princes of Mid'ian, Oreb and Zeeb; they killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the wine press of Zeeb, as they pursued Mid'ian; and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon beyond the Jordan.

**8** And the men of E'phraim said to him, 'What is this that you have done to us, not to call us when you went to fight with Mid'ian?' And they upbraided him violently. <sup>3</sup>And he said to them, 'What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of E'phraim better than the vintage of Abie'zer?' <sup>3</sup> God has given into your hands the princes of Mid'ian, Oreb and Zeeb; what have I been able to do in comparison with you?' Then their anger against him was abated, when he had said this.

**4** And Gideon came to the Jordan and passed over, he and the

As Gideon was already over Jordan in pursuit, the Ephraimite exploit (verses 24-25) though historical, seems to represent an independent Ephraimite tradition concerning the rock of Oreb ('Raven') and the wine-press of Zeeb ('Wolf').

#### *Gideon's Controversy with Ephraim 8.1-3*

Prompted by the folk-saying, 'Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?' (verse 2), probably the Abiezrite version of the incident, and suggested in this context by the local Ephraimite tradition of the place-names, the rock of Oreb and the wine-press of Zeeb. Ephraim, soon to rise to the hegemony of Israel with Samuel, already resented the assumption of leadership by any other, as notably in the case of Jephthah (12.1-6), by which time they had colonists beyond Jordan.

**2. gleaning:** (Hebrew *'ôl'lot*). Used specifically of grapes, summer fruits, and olives (Mic. 7.1; Isa. 17.6, 24.13; Jer. 49.9), but not of grain. The allusion is to the capture of the chiefs. The reference to the victory as the exploit of Abiezer is noteworthy in view of our interpretation of Gideon's campaign (see on 7.2-8).

**3. their anger:** lit. 'their spirit', expressive of the invasive influence which altered a man, e.g. in prophetic inspiration, poetic exaltation, phenomenal strength, madness, or, as here and in Prov. 15.32, 25.28; Job 15.13; Ec. 10.4, hot temper.

three hundred men who were with him, faint yet pursuing.<sup>5</sup> So he said to the men of Succoth, 'Pray, give loaves of bread to the people who follow me; for they are faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmun'na, the kings of Mid'ian.'<sup>6</sup> And the officials of Succoth said, 'Are Zebah and Zalmun'na already in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?'<sup>7</sup> And Gideon said, 'Well then, when the

*Gideon in Transjordan 4-21*

A tradition independent of 7.24-25 (see Introduction, p. 226).

**4. and passed over:** so *RSV* after LXX, Syriac, and the Vulgate for M.T. participle, which is barely possible.

**the three hundred men:** if this were part of the same tradition as in chapter 7, we should expect many more in the pursuit. This is a different exploit by a permanent striking force, or a body of Gideon's clansmen, on a mission of vengeance. The definite article indicates harmonization with chapter 7.

**faint yet pursuing:** a possible translation, but doubtful; cf. LXX<sup>A</sup>, Syro-Hexaplar, and Old Latin versions: 'exhausted and hungry', with slight change of two consonants.

**5. Succoth:** (lit. 'bivouacs'). Probably Khirbet Deir 'Allā, or one of several adjacent tells just north of the mouth of the Jabbok, where H. Franken has discovered evidence of metallurgy (cf. 1 Kg. 7.46), and the name may signify originally the temporary dwellings of itinerant smiths.

**Zebah and Zalmunna:** ('Sacrifice', and possibly 'Refuge refused') are either Hebrew word-plays on actual names, or artificial names given to unnamed chiefs in the light of the sequel. The fact that the chiefs are termed not 'princes' or 'leaders', as in 7.25, but 'kings' corroborates the latter suggestion.

**6. Are Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hand?:** so *RSV* reading *ha'ap* for M.T. *h<sup>a</sup>kap* ('Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hand?'). *Ha'ap* often introduces a dramatic question, but M.T. may be retained here, the hand of the enemy in the victor's hand either signifying submission or a trophy of victory according to Egyptian practice (so Nötscher, op. cit., p. 35), now further attested in the Baal-myth of Rās Shamra, where *kp* is actually used.

**officials:** (Hebrew *šarim*). Probably active leaders appointed by the elders, who are mentioned also in verse 14. The defiant reply of the men of Succoth does not suggest the sequel to the victory and rout of 7.19ff., but a separate exploit at some considerable interval.

**7. I will flail your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briars:** the verb *dāš* denotes threshing, either by trampling beasts or by threshing-sledges shod with sharp stones or metal points. Thus we consider that the preposition should be translated 'together with' and not taken as instrumental, the sense being

LORD has given Zebah and Zalmun'na into my hand, I will flail your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers.' <sup>8</sup>And from there he went up to Penu'el, and spoke to them in the same way; and the men of Penu'el answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. <sup>9</sup>And he said to the men of Penu'el, 'When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.'

10 Now Zebah and Zalmun'na were in Karkor with their army, about fifteen thousand men, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for there had fallen a hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword. <sup>11</sup>And Gideon went up by the caravan route east of Nobah and Jog'behah, and attacked the army;

that Gideon would trample down the bodies of the men of Succoth with as little ceremony as he would trample down the thorns and briers of the wilderness. In verse 16 the thorns are actually the instrument of chastisement (see *ad loc.*), but this verse may be a redactional gloss. The word rendered 'briers' is unknown except here and in verse 16.

**8. Penuel:** possibly Tulūl edh-Dhahab ('the Mounds of Gold'), so called from the yellow sandstone of which they are composed, standing on the Jabbok about five miles from its junction with the Jordan (so Albright and Glueck, after Merrill). Glueck locates Penuel more particularly at the eastern mound, where he found Early Iron Age potsherds, and there is no reason to doubt this location.

**9. in peace:** better 'safe and sound', peace being a secondary meaning of Hebrew *šālôm*, which means primarily, as here, a state of wholeness. The tower may have been a redoubt attached to an unwallled settlement such as has been recently noticed as a feature of Ammonite settlement west of 'Ammān (G. M. Landes, 'The Material Civilization of the Ammonites', *BA* XXIV, 1961, pp. 68-74, fig. 3).

**10. Karkor:** unknown. It is probably a common noun, 'waterholes', 'wells', or 'springs' (cf. *qr* in the Rās Shamra texts). It may indicate some oasis in the north Arabian steppe, like Qorāqir, which played a vital part in the dramatic switch of Khālīd ibn al-Walīd from Iraq to Damascus in A.D. 632.

**all who were left . . . :** connects the incident with the action in chapter 7, but this may be a redactional gloss; cf. Nötscher (op. cit., p. 35), who suspects two sources here.

**11. by the caravan route:** rather a paraphrase for M.T., 'by way of those who dwelt in tents', or 'by way of the tent-settlements', i.e. the marginal land in the northern part of Transjordan towards the Hauran, where **Nobah**, also an element in the kinship of Manasseh, is noted among the tent-agglomerations of Jair (Num. 32.40-42). M.T. as it stands cannot be translated.

**Jogbehah:** noted among the settlements of Gad (Num. 32.35) west of 'Ammān.



for the army was off its guard. <sup>12</sup>And Zebah and Zalmun'na fled; and he pursued them and took the two kings of Mid'ian, Zebah and Zalmun'na, and he threw all the army into a panic.

13 Then Gideon the son of Jo'ash returned from the battle by the ascent of Heres. <sup>14</sup>And he caught a young man of Succoth, and questioned him; and he wrote down for him the officials and elders of Succoth, seventy-seven men. <sup>15</sup>And he came to the men of Succoth, and said, 'Behold Zebah and Zalmun'na, about whom you taunted me, saying, "Are Zebah and Zalmun'na already in your hand, that we should give bread to your men who are faint?"' <sup>16</sup>And he took the elders of the city and he took thorns of the

Here Khirbet el-Jubeihāt, c. 20 miles SE. of the Jordan at ed-Dāmiyeh, may preserve the name. In view of the distance between these two sites this passage either describes a much longer campaign than is at first apparent or is a telescoping of different punitive expeditions of Gideon and his striking-force.

**12. threw . . . into a panic:** (Hebrew *heḥ'riḏ*). Not the expected description of the culmination of the campaign. The word may be a corruption of *heḥ'rîm* ('devoted to destruction') or *heḥ'rîḥ* ('destroyed').

**13. by the ascent of Heres:** a locality unknown, but familiar to the inhabitants of Succoth, and indicative of local tradition. The Greek and Syriac versions indicate uncertainty in the reading Heres. Aquila (c. A.D. 130), with a change of the last sibilant, reads 'forest', which may be correct, the M.T. being possibly a scribal corruption suggested by the similar word ending the previous verse. The element *l* in *mil'ma'a lēh* is now known from the Rās Shamra texts to signify 'from' as well as 'to', thus amplifying the preposition *min*.

**14. wrote down:** already by the 12th century B.C. the linear alphabet of twenty-two signs had been developed. This was easily mastered even by memories less retentive than those of the ancient Oriental, which was so well trained in oral tradition, so that the ability of a young lad encountered by chance need surprise us no more than the alphabetic inscriptions of the same kind left by Canaanite slaves in the turquoise mines in Sinai. On the local government of Succoth by elders and younger, more active executives ('officials'), see on verse 6.

**seventy-seven:** probably the indefinite number of saga; cf. the seventy sons of Ahab (2 Kg. 10.1), of Gideon (verse 30 and 9.2), the seventy souls who went down with Jacob to Egypt (Gen. 46.27), the seventy 'brothers' of the Aramaean king Panammu, slain by a usurper, and the seventy brothers slain by Baal in the Rās Shamra myth (Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook*, 75, II, 47-50).

**16. taught:** lit. 'caused to know', or, assuming an Arabic cognate *wada'a*, 'made them meek'. LXX and the Syriac version, with the change of one consonant of

wilderness and briers and with them taught the men of Succoth. <sup>17</sup>And he broke down the tower of Penu'el, and slew the men of the city.

<sup>18</sup> Then he said to Zebah and Zalmun'na, 'Where are the men whom you slew at Tabor?' They answered, 'As you are, so were they, every one of them; they resembled the sons of a king.' <sup>19</sup>And he said, 'They were my brothers, the sons of my mother; as the LORD lives, if you had saved them alive, I would not slay you.' <sup>20</sup>And he said to Jether his first-born, 'Rise, and slay them.' But the youth did not draw his sword; for he was afraid, because he was still a youth. <sup>21</sup> Then Zebah and Zalmun'na said, 'Rise yourself, and fall upon us; for as the man is, so is his strength.' And Gideon arose and slew Zebah and Zalmun'na; and he took the crescents that were on the necks of their camels.

M.T. read 'he threshed them', suggested by verse 7, on which see. But the verse may be a redactional gloss.

**18-21.** The vengeance motif suddenly emerges. The killing of the brothers of Gideon at Tabor can hardly refer to the action against the Midianites at Moreh near Tabor, since that was not a battle but a rout. If there is such a connection it must refer to some unrecorded incident before this action, but it probably represents a different tradition from the narrative in chapter 7. For 'Where . . . at Tabor?' (*'ēpōh . . . b'tābôr*) we may read, with comparatively slight emendation, 'How . . . in appearance' (*'ēkāh . . . b'tō'ar*). This is suggested by the Syriac version and the Vulgate (which read 'How?'), and by the answer in verse 18.

**18. every one:** reading *'ehād 'ehād* for M.T. *'ehād*.

**19. the sons of my mother:** perhaps in parallelism with 'my brothers', which would indicate the poetic cadence of oral tradition, but in a polygamous society it was practical to define one's brother more closely either as half-brother or uterine brother.

**20. Jether:** a variant of Jethro, the truncated form of a theophoric name. The social duty of blood-revenge is given to Jether, the eldest son of Gideon, who thus thought to 'blood' him. The lad, however, shrinks from slaughter in cold blood.

**21. crescents:** (Hebrew *šah'rônîm*), cognate with Arabic for 'month', 'new moon'. The nomads have always observed astral cults. The crescents were used as amulets on the camels or as ornaments; and today blue beads of glass are often hung on children, animals, and even on motor-buses and cars among the more primitive Arabs, to avert the influence of the evil eye. Gold crescents (cf. verse 26) have been found at Tell el-Ajjul and other sites.

22 Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, 'Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also; for you have delivered us out of the hand of Mid'ian.' <sup>23</sup> Gideon said to them, 'I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the LORD will rule over you.' <sup>24</sup> And Gideon said to them, 'Let me make a request of you; give me every man of you the earrings of his spoil.' (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ish'maelites.) <sup>25</sup> And they answered, 'We will willingly give them.'

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*The Affair of the Kingship 22-23*

The tradition, which told of Gideon's acceptance, as indicated in his control of the spoils of the Midianites (verses 24-27) and in Abimelech's claim to succeed (9.2ff.), is truncated in the interests of Deuteronomic theology (see Introduction to Judges, pp. 226-229).

22. The title 'king' is never used of Gideon or of Yahweh in this passage, though it is implied in the hereditary principle mentioned here and cited by Abimelech (9.2ff.), which posits an institution rather than the strictly personal charismatic authority of the 'judge', which is nevertheless taken as the basis of the hereditary office visualized. The gift of leadership and success is a token of the divine favour, which, according to the ancient conception was infectious, hence inherent particularly in a successful leader's own family. The use of the same verb 'to rule' (*māšal*) of the whole of Gideon's family simultaneously may seem to modify the view that Gideon was actually king. The use of the verb in Gideon's case, however, may be due to the Deuteronomic historian, who did not wish to mar the reputation of one whose divine call was confirmed by his success. Again, in view of the very modified status of Saul as king, Gideon's rule was probably no more than a limited adumbration of kingship. The conception of the kingship of God is generally particularized in the Old Testament in Psalms and the Prophets in the context of the conflict between Cosmos and Chaos with its antecedents in the myth of the New Year festival in the fertility-cult of Canaan and Mesopotamia and the adaptation of the theme in Hebrew religion. It is expressed much later than the time of Gideon, when the assimilation of this cult and its ideology was at the most in its early stages.

*The Spoils of Midian and the Ephod of Ophrah 24-27*

24. **earrings:** the Hebrew word *nezem* signifies both earring (Gen. 35.4; Exod. 32.2-3, etc.) and nose-ring (Gen. 24.47; Isa. 3.21; Prov. 11.22). In the present context the former is the meaning.

**Ishmaelites:** note the variant to 'Midianites', as in the J and E versions of the Joseph story. Hebrew tradition derives the former from Abraham through Hagar



And they spread a garment, and every man cast in it the earrings of his spoil. <sup>26</sup>And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold; besides the crescents and the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Mid'ian, and besides the collars that were about the necks of their camels. <sup>27</sup>And Gideon made an ephod of it and put it in his city, in Ophrah; and all Israel played the harlot after it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and to his family. <sup>28</sup> So Mid'ian was subdued before the people of Israel, and they lifted up their heads no more. And the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon.

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(Gen. 16.16) and the latter from him through his second wife, Keturah (Gen. 25.1-6).

**26. one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold:** i.e. between 40 and 75 lb. according as the shekel was light or heavy. The verse may be a redactional expansion, as Wellhausen suggested (so also Moore).

**pendants:** lit. 'drops', probably earrings.

**27. ephod:** (Akkadian *epadatu*, a garment). As distinct from the priest's loin-cloth (1 Sam. 2.18; 2 Sam. 6.14), this was a garment or similar covering to be laid over some symbol of the divine presence at a shrine, or worn by a priest. It was used for divination (1 Sam. 23.6, 30.7) and probably contained pockets for the sacred lots, the Urim and Thummim (Exod. 28.28-30). It survived as a relic in the high priest's pectoral set with its twelve precious and semi-precious stones. The weight of metal in Gideon's ephod suggests that it was more in the nature of an image, but verse 26 may be a redactional expansion and the tradition may be exaggerated or distorted through later theological bias. In congruity with the root meaning of ephod we regard it as the covering for a symbol of the divine presence either in sheet metal or in metal brocade, such as is attested in texts from the palace at Rās Shamra. The setting up of the ephod at Gideon's home at Ophrah, where a cult-place of Yahweh is attested (6.19-24), is significant in view of the use of the ephod in divination. As the leader in Israel it was important for Gideon to have ready access to, and perhaps even control over, the lot-oracle.

**27b.** The language indicates Deuteronomistic comment.

**28c.** This is also from the Deuteronomistic historian, the forty years' rest being part of his chronological framework.

#### *Deuteronomistic Summary of the End of Gideon's Life and his Obituary 29-32*

In stating that 'Jerubbaal . . . went and dwelt in his own house' the Deuteronomistic compiler is obviously interested only in the deliverance effected by Gideon as a charismatic leader within the general pattern of his history. He admits a fuller tradition of Gideon's rule from Ophrah only to emphasize his theology of the theocracy in Israel. After the mention of the significance of Ophrah as the seat of

29 Jerubba'al the son of Jo'ash went and dwelt in his own house'  
 30 Now Gideon had seventy sons, his own offspring, for he had many wives. 31 And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he called his name Abim'elech. 32 And Gideon the son of Jo'ash died in a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Jo'ash his father, at Ophrah of the Abiez'rites.

33 As soon as Gideon died, the people of Israel turned again and played the harlot after the Ba'als, and made Ba'al-be'rith their god. 34 And the people of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had rescued them from the hand of all their enemies on every side; 35 and they did not show kindness to the family of Jerubba'al (that is, Gideon) in return for all the good that he had done to Israel.

Gideon's authority and of the oracle of Yahweh, the statement of verse 29 sounds tame and obviously artificial in the nature of a summary. The interest already moves on, as indicated by the mention of his large harem and large family, including Abimelech the son of his concubine in Shechem, to the expansive narrative of Abimelech's abortive kingship, which is used by the Deuteronomist as sufficient commentary on the institution, of which notice has already been given in what the Deuteronomist has retained from the beginning of the tradition of Gideon's acceptance of the kingship (8.23).

**31. his concubine:** (Hebrew *pīlāḡšō*). The designation may not be strictly accurate in view of Abimelech's recognized status in the family of Gideon and his influence among the men of Shechem. She was probably a *ṣadīka* wife, who continued to live in her father's house (see W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, 1887, p. 75ff.). Jotham's description of the woman as his 'father's maid-servant', though probably an exaggeration, reflects the feeling of the son of one of the wives who lived in Gideon's household.

#### *Deuteronomic Transition from the Story of Gideon to that of Abimelech 33-35*

The latter tradition, though Abimelech was not a 'judge', was too significant to be overlooked, serving the Deuteronomist as it did as an outstanding example of the evil consequences of the kingship and assimilation to the ways of Canaan, here particularized by the relations between Israel and the people of Shechem, which were established long before (Gen. 34), probably on the basis of a covenant at the shrine of the local god, called in consequence Baal-berith ('Lord of the Covenant'). The alleged defection to Baal-berith refers strictly to the ascendancy of the Canaanizing elements in Israel about Shechem.

**35. and they did not show kindness to the family of Jerubbaal:** anticipates the fratricide of Abimelech with the support of the Shechemites (9.1-5).



9 Now Abim'elech the son of Jerubba'al went to Shechem to his mother's kinsmen and said to them and to the whole clan of his mother's family, <sup>2</sup> 'Say in the ears of all the citizens of Shechem, "Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubba'al

#### THE REIGN OF ABIMELECH 9.1-57

On the relation of the incident to the plan of the Deuteronomic historian, see Introduction to Judges, p. 229. By the time the history was conceived, towards the end of the monarchy, the kingship was accepted both by prophets (Isa. 9.6-7 (M.T. 5-6)) and by the Deuteronomist, for whom the divine covenant with the House of David was an article of faith. Accordingly, the kingship is criticized (e.g. 1 Sam. 8) according as it may proceed from purely human initiative apart from the divine call and charisma and the understanding that the king was the vassal of God (8.23). The kingship of Abimelech, secured by the personal ambition of this half-Canaanite with the support of the Canaanites of Shechem and particularly by the garrison of the local fortress, was supported by a personal force of desperadoes hired with funds from the local shrine of Baal-berith and effected by fratricide (verses 1-5) and serves the Deuteronomist admirably as a caricature of the institution unlimited by the characteristic features of the monarchy in Israel. He cites in support of his condemnation the fable of Jotham (verses 8-20). The narrative of the miserable end of Abimelech, betrayed by the Shechemites and killed by the hand of a woman, is cited in full to confirm the Deuteronomic assessment.

#### *Abimelech's Coup and the Massacre of the Family of Gideon 1-6*

**1. Abimelech . . . went to Shechem:** probably having been brought up as a regular son in Gideon's home in Ophrah.

**Shechem:** Tell Balāṭa, just east of modern Nāblus in the pass between Ebal and Gerizim from the coastal plain to the Jordan valley and commanding the hill-roads south to Bethel and Jerusalem and north to Bethshan, was traditionally associated with the Hebrews from the time of the patriarchs, when it was a holy site (Gen. 35.1-5) and the traditional burial-place of Joseph (Jos. 24.32). Hebrew relations with Shechem may go back to the 14th century when, one of the Amarna Tablets alleges, the local ruler Labaia had admitted Habiru into his district. This may connect with the association of Hebrew and Canaanite at Shechem in Genesis 34, which was probably established by covenant at the local shrine, called thence the shrine of Baal-berith, the Lord of the Covenant. Probably the Israelites after the settlement presumed upon this old association in fixing Shechem as the first central sanctuary of the sacral confederacy in Palestine (see further on Jos. 8.30-35 and chapter 24).

rule over you, or that one rule over you?" Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh.' <sup>3</sup>And his mother's kinsmen spoke all these words on his behalf in the ears of all the men of Shechem; and their hearts inclined to follow Abim'elech, for they said, 'He is our brother.' <sup>4</sup>And they gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the house of Ba'al-be'rith with which Abim'elech hired worthless and reckless fellows, who followed him. <sup>5</sup>And he went to his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brothers the sons of Jerubba'al, seventy men, upon one stone; but Jotham the youngest son of Jerubba'al was left, for he hid himself. <sup>6</sup>And all the citizens of Shechem came

**his mother's kinsmen:** the influence of Abimelech's mother's family in Shechem is assumed, which reflects on her status as a *ṣadīka* wife rather than as a concubine (see on 8.31-32).

**4. seventy pieces of silver:** a conventional large sum (see on the seventy sons of Gideon, etc., 8.14).

**the house of Baal-berith:** 'house' here, as in the Rās Shamra texts, means 'temple'. Temples were also treasuries, repositories of votive gifts, as in the Rās Shamra legend of King Krt, and of spoils of war, like Solomon's Temple (1 Kg. 7.51). This temple is identified by G. E. Wright (*Shechem*, 1965, pp. 80-102), after Sellin, with the large building, once double-storeyed, at the summit of the city-site, which was built in the 17th century and destroyed after its third reconstruction in the 12th century.

**hired worthless and reckless fellows:** probably anticipating feudal rule, which was already the pattern in the Canaanite principalities, as attested in administrative texts from the palace of Rās Shamra and adapted by Saul (1 Sam. 8.11ff.) and David. RSV 'worthless' means literally 'empty', without visible evidence of material success, as the destitute and desperate who joined David in the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. 22.2). This, for the ancient Semite, who believed that material success was the concomitant of moral worth, reflected on the character, which was 'hasty' (AV 'light').

**5. upon one stone:** this was possibly hollow, to concentrate the blood of his brothers, the baneful effect of which on the land (cf. Gen. 4.10-12) was apprehended by the ancients; cf. Abimelech's sowing of Shechem with salt (verse 45) to neutralize the effect of the blood of his kinsmen (A. M. Honeyman, *VT* III, 1953, pp. 192-95).

**6. Beth-millo** is distinguished from **Shechem**, as the Tower of Shechem is distinguished from the city (verses 46ff.). Millo is a common noun, the Akkadian cognate of which denotes an artificial earthwork, terrace, or embankment. At Jerusalem it may denote the 'filling out' by terrace and buttress of the steep slope

together, and all Beth-millo, and they went and made Abim'elech king, by the oak of the pillar at Shechem.

7 When it was told to Jotham, he went and stood on the top of Mount Geri'zim, and cried aloud and said to them, 'Listen to me, you men of Shechem, that God may listen to you.<sup>8</sup> The trees once went

and particularly the depression to the east between the ancient settlement on the south-east hill and the north-east, or Temple, hill in Solomon's time. Wright has established that the temple (probably that of El-berith) and its precinct stood on an artificial 'fill', or esplanade (op. cit., pp. 80ff.), which is denoted by *millô*'. Thus the people of Shechem and of Beth-millo may denote not two distinct settlements but rather the people of the settlement in general and an upper stratum, perhaps descended from the class of professional soldiers so characteristic of the city-states of Syro-Palestine in the Amarna Age (15th-14th centuries); cf. the Hara ('downtown') and Qasba ('citadel') in north African towns. An alternative name for Beth-millo may have been, as Wright suggests (op. cit., pp. 126ff.), 'the Tower of Shechem', so called after the first temple on the site, which was sufficiently massive to have served also as a citadel. This would accord with the statement in verses 46ff. that after the destruction of the town of Shechem the inhabitants of the Tower of Shechem took refuge in the temple of El-berith. At Shechem it possibly means a redoubt, possibly so called because of its revetted defences.

**made Abimelech king, by the oak of the pillar at Shechem:** so RSV, after Moore, Nowack, Burney, and Gressmann, with slight, and probably correct, emendation of M.T. This may suggest the sacred tree of Gen. 35.4, respected by the Hebrew patriarchs, which, however, was not an oak but a terebinth, and the standing stone (Hebrew *maššēbāh*), which was witness of the covenant (Jos. 24.27), but in view of the significance of the transaction for the men of Shechem, it may simply indicate the tree and stone familiar in any Canaanite sanctuary. G. R. Driver (JTS XXXV, 1934, p. 390) would retain M.T. 'ēlôn muššāb, regarding it as the sacred oak which was 'propped up' through age.

*Jotham's Admonition and Appeal, respectively in Fable (verses 8-15) and Prose Imprecation (verses 16-20), and his Escape (verse 21).*

See Introduction, pp. 229f.

**7. the top of Mount Gerizim:** actually a lower crag of this wooded mountain, which towers over ancient Shechem from the south.

**8-15. Jotham's fable.** Fruitful trees are too content and preoccupied with fruitful work to seek pre-eminence. Only the low straggling buckthorn, which has a potential only to choke and, through friction in the dry summer, to start a forest fire, accepts the honour on its own terms. So the kingship, secured by personal ambition, without call, gift, or sense of responsibility, bodes only ill.



forth to anoint a king over them; and they said to the olive tree, "Reign over us." <sup>9</sup> But the olive tree said to them, "Shall I leave my fatness, by which gods and men are honoured, and go to sway over the trees?" <sup>10</sup> And the trees said to the fig tree, "Come you, and reign over us." <sup>11</sup> But the fig tree said to them, "Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to sway over the trees?" <sup>12</sup> And the trees said to the vine, "Come you, and reign over us." <sup>13</sup> But the vine said to them, "Shall I leave my wine which cheers gods and men, and go to sway over the trees?" <sup>14</sup> Then all the trees said to the bramble, "Come you, and reign over us." <sup>15</sup> And the bramble said to the trees, "If in good faith you are anointing me king over you,

**8. to anoint a king:** the regular means of investiture with the royal office in the ancient Near East. Olive oil was considered to heal and strengthen, and in the royal investiture special power was probably considered thus to be conferred. But the administrative texts from the palace of Rās Shamra attest anointing as a rite of emancipation, hence in royal and priestly investiture it signified the setting-apart of the subject. The special authority of the king was also delegated by anointing as in the case of Canaanite vassals of the Egyptian Eighteenth Dynasty (E. Kutsch, *Salbung als Rechtsakt im Alten Testament und in Alten Orient*, BZAW LXXXVII, 1963, pp. 1-78). Here the anointing by the other trees emphasizes the rite as one of setting apart.

**9. the olive:** like the fig and the vine, specially mentioned in the description of Syria or Palestine in the Egyptian Tale of Sinuhe (20th century B.C.). All are admirably cultivated on the terraced hillsides exposed to the Mediterranean climate. **my fatness, by which gods and men are honoured:** so RSV after LXX (Vaticanus). The reference is to the use of oil in sacrifice with meal, and in entertainment, e.g. Ps. 23.5, in the anointing of the guest with oil, where the verb is of the same root as 'fatness'.

**to sway over:** derogatory and even ridiculous; mere posturing in contrast to fruitful contribution.

**13. wine:** actually, new wine, the fermentation of the must, which is also so denoted, being checked at an early stage.

**which cheers gods and men:** in libations and especially at the harvest festival, when wine flowed freely (verse 27; Amos 2.8).

**14. bramble:** (Hebrew *'ātād*). *Lycium europaeum*. A quick-burning fuel, understood by Sa'adya as Arabic *'awsāj* ('buckthorn'), the low thorn-scrub which, though it may rise to the height of a tree, affords a meagre shade and is fruitless.

**15. shade:** (Hebrew *šēl*). The word has a *double entendre*, 'protection' and 'shade', of which the buckthorn with its thin foliage has none.

then come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

16 'Now therefore, if you acted in good faith and honour when you made Abim'elech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubba'al and his house, and have done to him as his deeds deserved—<sup>17</sup> for my father fought for you, and risked his life, and rescued you from the hand of Mid'ian; <sup>18</sup> and you have risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, seventy men on one stone, and have made Abim'elech, the son of his maidservant, king over the citizens of Shechem, because he is your kinsman—<sup>19</sup> if you then have acted in good faith and honour with Jerubba'al and with his house this day, then rejoice in Abim'elech, and let him also rejoice in you; <sup>20</sup> but if not, let fire come out from Abim'elech, and devour the citizens of Shechem, and Beth-millo; and let fire come out from the citizens of Shechem, and from Beth-millo, and devour Abim'elech.' <sup>21</sup> And Jotham ran away and fled, and went to Beer and dwelt there, for fear of Abim'elech his brother.

22 Abim'elech ruled over Israel three years. <sup>23</sup> And God sent an

**the cedars of Lebanon:** the acme of stature and majesty among plants and the antithesis of the scrub (cf. 2 Kg. 14.9).

**16-20.** *Jotham's imprecation* has the form of two long conditional sentences; the first (verses 16-19) with three protases, the last repeated (verse 19a) after a long parenthesis (verses 17-18), and the second (verse 20) quite simple.

**16. in good faith and honour** (or sincerity): the second and third protases might be paraphrased 'assuming that you have done well by Jerubbaal, etc'.

**17. risked his life:** a good paraphrase of the Hebrew, lit. 'cast his life before (him)', or 'far (from him)'.

**18. his maidservant:** see on 8.31.

**19. rejoice in Abimelech:** it is noteworthy that Jotham's objection is personal, and not to the kingship as such, a fact which is surely relevant to the question of Gideon's kingship.

**20b.** Jotham gives an additional turn to the application of the parable. While warning of the fatal consequences of association with Abimelech, he drops a shrewd hint that the men of Shechem and of Beth-millo had the power to destroy him.

**21. to Beer:** this element ('well') is so common in place-names as to be quite undeterminable. The M.T. *b'e'ērāh* may be a scribal corruption of *be'ēdōm* ('in Edom').



evil spirit between Abim'elech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abim'elech; <sup>24</sup> that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubba'al might come and their blood be laid upon Abim'elech their brother, who slew them, and upon the men of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to slay his brothers. <sup>25</sup> And the men of Shechem put men in ambush against him on the mountain tops, and they robbed all who passed by them along that way; and it was told Abim'elech.

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*The Revolt against Abimelech 22-41*

It has been suggested that there are two accounts of this revolt, that in verses 22-25 and 43-49 (verse 42a being redactional), and that of the abortive attempt of Gaal, which is defeated by Abimelech and his local commandant, Zebul (verses 26-41). We regard the two as accounts of distinct actions.

22-25 are a general introduction freely adapted by the Deuteronomic compiler, especially in verse 24, who emphasizes the retribution for the fratricide of Abimelech. In verse 25ff. the circumstantial detail indicates genuine local historical tradition. The fact that Zebul held his place as Abimelech's city-commandant and was able eventually to expel Gaal and his party from Shechem indicates that the people of Shechem were not bitterly hostile to Abimelech, though in their own lawless interests not willing to support his authority. This encouraged Gaal's attempt, which obviously fell within the three-year reign of Abimelech, but was not part of the action of the Shechemites in verse 25 or of Abimelech's final reduction of Shechem (verses 42b-49), though his drastic treatment of Shechem was probably not unconnected with their complacency in the affair of Gaal.

The whole is probably compiled from a general Israelite tradition, especially verses 22-25 and 42b-49, and verses 26-41 from a local Shechemite version.

**22-25 Anarchy in Shechem**, the beginning of retribution for Abimelech, continued at verses 42b-49.

**22. ruled:** a denominative verb from Hebrew *šar* ('leader'), used also of the officials of Succoth (8.6).

**over Israel:** this indicates rather the hand of the Deuteronomic compiler in view of the strictly local rule of Abimelech about Shechem and Ophrah.

**23. God sent an evil spirit:** the invasive influence which thwarted the purpose of Abimelech and disrupted the union which the parties themselves had willingly contracted. 'Evil', meaning here rather 'disastrous', describes the effect of the supernatural influence. A rough analogy is the lying spirit by which God animated the prophets to lead Ahab to his doom (1 Kg. 22.19-23).

**25.** The strategic situation of Shechem and the narrow pass by two main cross-roads (see on verse 1; 8.30-35) gave great opportunities for brigandage. Nāblus,

26 And Ga'al the son of Ebed moved into Shechem with his kinsmen; and the men of Shechem put confidence in him. <sup>27</sup>And they went out into the field, and gathered the grapes from their vineyards and trod them, and held festival, and went into the house of their god, and ate and drank and reviled Abim'elech. <sup>28</sup>And Ga'al the son of Ebed said, 'Who is Abim'elech, and who are we of Shechem, that we should serve him? Did not the son of Jerubba'al and Zebul his officer serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem? Why then should we serve him? <sup>29</sup> Would that this people were under my hand! then I would remove Abim'elech. I would say to Abim'elech, "Increase your army, and come out."'

Tulkarm, and Jenin formed the notorious 'Triangle of Terror' in the British Mandate. The mountain-tops were occupied not as ambushes but to alert parties in ambush of approaching caravans, or, if 'against him' is genuine, to prevent Abimelech's security measures or to undermine his authority.

#### *Gaal's Rising 26-41*

**26. Gaal the son of Ebed:** possibly Goal, but in any case a curious name; cf. *gō'al* ('loathing'), which may suggest the parody of his real name. Ebed occurs as an element in theophoric names, but not absolutely as a proper name, and the form Obed is more likely, the M.T. being a wilful perversion of the name to 'Loathing, the son of a slave'. The identity and status of this man and his 'brothers' is unknown. But for the statement that he 'moved into Shechem' we might have thought that he and his 'brothers' were an influential Canaanite family in Shechem; but 'brothers' in this case possibly means 'party', of uncertain identity.

**27. held festival:** Hebrew *hillālīm*. Properly, (a festival of) praise, showing appreciation of the bounty of nature by uninhibited joy and shouting and liberal eating and drinking (cf. Isa. 9.3 (M.T. 2); Ps. 4.7 (M.T. 8)). The fruit of trees in their fourth year, which was dedicated to God in thanks, was termed 'a holy thing of praise' (*kōdeš hillālīm*). The verbal root probably denotes the exuberant licence of the marriage song in Ps. 78.63. In such a mood local feeling against the half-Israelite Abimelech, whose seat was apparently at Ophrah, asserted itself in the general cursing of the king.

**28. who are we of Shechem?:** so RSV probably correctly as indicated by the following verb for Hebrew lit. 'Who is Shechem?'

**Did not the son of Jerubbaal . . . serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem?:** so RSV, reading *'ab'dā* for M.T. imperative *'ib'dā*, indicating that Abimelech and his officer were put in office by the Hamor clan of Shechem.

30 When Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Ga'al the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled. <sup>31</sup>And he sent messengers to Abim'elech at Aru'mah, saying, 'Behold, Ga'al the son of Ebed and his kinsmen have come to Shechem, and they are stirring up the city against you. <sup>32</sup>Now therefore, go by night, you and the men that are with you, and lie in wait in the fields. <sup>33</sup>Then in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, rise early and rush upon the city; and when he and the men that are with him come out against you, you may do to them as occasion offers.'

34 And Abim'elech and all the men that were with him rose up by night, and laid wait against Shechem in four companies. <sup>35</sup>And Ga'al the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city; and Abim'elech and the men that were with him rose from the

Another possibility is suggested by certain mss. of LXX: 'Are not the son of Jerubbaal and Zebul . . . holding the men of Hamor in servitude?'

**Hamor the father of Shechem:** cf. the apparently personal narrative of the relations between the family of Jacob and these Shechemites (Gen. 34). The men of Hamor in the present passage may be the dominant native clan in Shechem, 'the father of Shechem' being a redactional expansion suggested by Genesis 34.

**29. I would say:** so RSV after LXX for M.T. 'and he said', which is not appropriate in Abimelech's absence.

**30.** The complicated situation, also reflected throughout the narrative, is indicated by the fact that, in spite of the anarchy of the Shechemites and the opposition of Gaal, Abimelech's commandant could remain in Shechem throughout.

**31. at Arumah:** so RSV after verse 41, reading *bā'rūmāh* for M.T. *b'tormāh*, AV 'craftily', which is just possible.

**stirring up:** so RSV, reading *m'irīm* for M.T. *šārīm* ('besieging'), which, however, is not unintelligible in view of the fact that Zebul was in a hostile city, and is actually read, followed by the appropriate preposition 'al in a fragment of Judges from Qumrān (see General Introduction, p. 12). But Zebul had apparently freedom of movement and continued to have free communication with Gaal (verses 36ff.).

**33. rush upon:** actually, 'deploy', attack in open formation from concentration in ambush (cf. 20.37) and of a general attack, with the implication of deploying from concentrated formation (1 Sam. 23.27, 30.1, 14).

**35. went out and stood in the entrance of the gate:** not 'marched out', as he did not expect the enemy, who were in ambush (verses 35-36), but simply 'went out' to the place of common gathering.

ambush. <sup>36</sup>And when Ga'al saw the men, he said to Zebul, 'Look, men are coming down from the mountain tops!' And Zebul said to him, 'You see the shadow of the mountains as if they were men.' <sup>37</sup>Ga'al spoke again and said, 'Look, men are coming down from the centre of the land, and one company is coming from the direction of the Diviners' Oak.' <sup>38</sup>Then Zebul said to him, 'Where is your mouth now, you who said, "Who is Abim'elech, that we should serve him?" Are not these the men whom you despised? Go out now and fight with them.' <sup>39</sup>And Ga'al went out at the head of the men of Shechem, and fought with Abim'elech. <sup>40</sup>And Abim'elech chased him, and he fled before him; and many fell wounded, up to the entrance of the gate. <sup>41</sup>And Abim'elech dwelt at Aru'mah; and Zebul drove out Ga'al and his kinsmen, so that they could not live on at Shechem.

<sup>42</sup>On the following day the men went out into the fields. And Abim'elech was told. <sup>43</sup>He took his men and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the fields; and he looked and saw the men coming out of the city, and he rose against them and slew them. <sup>44</sup>Abim'elech and the company that was with him rushed forward

**36. from the mountain tops:** i.e. Ebal and Gerizim.

**37. the centre of the land:** Hebrew *ṭabbūr hā-'āreṣ*, lit. 'the navel of the land'; cf. Ezek. 38.12 and Aramaic, so understood by LXX and the Vulgate. This was either a small hill, which would be east of Shechem, as Rashi and Kimḥi suggest, or more probably, in our opinion, the point east of Shechem where the roads north, south, east, and west crossed.

**the Diviners' Oak:** an oracle-oak near Shechem, possibly the oak of Moreh ('the oak of the oracle-giver'). The verb *'ānan* is found of augury also in 2 Kg. 21.6, being possibly cognate with the Arabic verb *'anna* meaning 'to hum' (of persons or insects).

**42a.** This clause is possibly editorial, linking the two separate narratives, verses 22-25, 42b-49 and verses 26-41.

#### *The Reduction of Shechem 42b-49*

Continued from verse 25. Gaal's expulsion with his party by Zebul indicates perhaps that the Shechemites were glad to make them the scapegoats, while Abimelech was at Arumah, a locality unknown but probably near Shechem.

**44. rushed forward:** 'deployed' (see on verse 33).

and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city, while the two companies rushed upon all who were in the fields and slew them. <sup>45</sup>And Abim'elech fought against the city all that day; he took the city, and killed the people that were in it; and he razed the city and sowed it with salt.

<sup>46</sup> When all the people of the Tower of Shechem heard of it, they entered the stronghold of the house of El-be'rith. <sup>47</sup>Abim'elech was told that all the people of the Tower of Shechem were gathered together. <sup>48</sup>And Abim'elech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the men that were with him; and Abim'elech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bundle of brushwood, and took it up and laid it on his shoulder. And he said to the men that were with him, 'What you

**45. sowed it with salt:** perhaps symbolic of irrevocable destruction. So the Carthaginians did in two instances in the Punic wars. The custom is otherwise unknown in the Old Testament. It may have been a prophylactic rite to neutralize the influence of kinsmen's blood (see on verse 5), or, more probably, in view of the significance of salt as 'unproductive seed', to curse the survivors with barrenness and so obviate blood-revenge.

The finality of the note on the sowing of Shechem with salt in verse 45 indicates that verses 46-49 refer to an incident before this and simultaneous with the actual destruction of the lower town. It is therefore from a variant source; so E. Nielsen (*Shechem, A Traditio-Historical Investigation*, 1955, p. 131) and Wright (op. cit. pp. 126-28).

**46. the Tower of Shechem:** see on verse 6.  
**stronghold:** so RSV after LXX<sup>A</sup>, *ochurōma*. The word (*s'riālī*) is known in the Old Testament only here and in 1 Sam. 13.6, where it is a place of hiding associated with caves and cisterns. In Nabataean funerary inscriptions it denotes a rock-hewn tomb. This might suggest a crypt or a rock-hewn chamber over which the temple was built, perhaps the original sanctuary, and so a natural place of refuge when the men of the Tower of Shechem despaired of resistance. Verse 49 in that case would signify that the refugees were smoked out or suffocated. The temple on the acropolis of Shechem, however, shows no such feature. The word in the present passage is, rather, cognate with Arabic *ṣarḥ*, meaning 'tower', as Wright suggests (op. cit., p. 127).

**48. Mount Zalmon:** i.e. 'Shady', not otherwise known, possibly another name for Gerizim on the south side of Shechem with a northern exposure, hence more shaded than Ebal, which is reflected in its heavier vegetation.

**an axe:** actually, in M.T., 'the axes', for which the singular should probably be read, the definite article indicating object understood in the situation (GK §126s).



have seen me do, make haste to do, as I have done.' <sup>49</sup> So every one of the people cut down his bundle and following Abim'elech put it against the stronghold, and they set the stronghold on fire over them, so that all the people of the Tower of Shechem also died, about a thousand men and women.

<sup>50</sup> Then Abim'elech went to Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it. <sup>51</sup> But there was a strong tower within the city, and all the people of the city fled to it, all the men and women, and shut themselves in; and they went to the roof of the tower. <sup>52</sup> And Abim'elech came to the tower, and fought against it, and drew near to the door of the tower to burn it with fire. <sup>53</sup> And a certain woman threw an upper millstone upon Abim'elech's head, and crushed his skull. <sup>54</sup> Then he called hastily to the young man his armour-bearer, and said to him, 'Draw your sword and kill me, lest men say of me, "A woman killed him."' And his young man thrust him through, and he died. <sup>55</sup> And when the men of Israel saw that Abim'elech was

### *The Death of Abimelech 50-55*

The siege of Thebez is introduced only to explain the death of Abimelech in fulfilment of just retribution (verses 56-57, which are possibly editorial).

**50. Thebez:** located by Eusebius thirteen Roman miles from Neapolis (Nāblus) on the road to Scythopolis (Beisān), where Tūbās is situated. The phonetic variation in the name may reflect the foreign settlement in the region, Neapolis being a settlement of Titus' veterans after A.D. 70.

**51. strong tower:** a redoubt either attached to the wall or, as here, independent, was a feature of Canaanite fortifications. It was surmounted generally by a battlemented platform projecting by corbelling, which gave the defenders the same advantage as machicolation (*ANEP*, Pl. 329).

**53. upper millstone:** lit. 'the riding millstone', as distinct from the lower millstone, than which it is lighter, was either a cylinder of hard stone, usually black basalt, about a foot in diameter and several inches thick, turned, often by two women, by a handle on a central pivot, or a long ovoid stone rubber.

**54. armour-bearer:** for armour on march or for spare weapons in combat (cf. 1 Sam. 14.6, 31.4ff.).

**kill me:** better 'dispatch me', in respect of the intensive form of the verb, as in 1 Sam. 14.13.

**55. men of Israel,** as distinct from the Canaanites of Shechem and Thebez, which indicates that the reign of Abimelech was accepted by at least some of the

dead, they departed every man to his home.<sup>56</sup> Thus God required the crime of Abim'elech, which he committed against his father in killing his seventy brothers;<sup>57</sup> and God also made all the wickedness of the men of Shechem fall back upon their heads, and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubba'al.

**10** After Abim'elech there arose to deliver Israel Tola the son of Pu'ah, son of Dodo, a man of Is'sachar; and he lived at

Israelites. It is noteworthy that there is no record of an Israelite revolt against Abimelech, and though not cordial towards him, they may have rallied on the revolt of the Canaanites of Shechem and the vicinity.

56-57. The principle of retribution is emphasized by the compiler, probably the Deuteronomist, who thus associated the incident of Jotham with the traditions of Abimelech's reign and death.

#### LIST OF 'MINOR JUDGES' 10.1-5

*Tola of Issachar* (verses 1-2) and *Jair of Gilead* (verses 3-5), continued in 12.8-15. These were probably official custodians and expounders of the law in the assembly of the sacral confederacy, and Jephthah also, whose length of office and burial-place are noted like the rest (12.7), as well as being a warrior associated with the deliverance of Israel, was probably such a figure, as is suggested by the incidence of the passage on him between the lists of the 'minor judges'. The passages on the 'minor judges' do not conform to the general editorial plan of the Book of Judges in that they are not associated with a spectacular act of deliverance after apostasy, oppression, appeal to God and divine mercy. Hence it is suggested that they have been included simply to supplement the number of the 'great judges' to the conventional number of twelve, thus possibly to make the judges as representative as possible of all elements in Israel. The stereotyped formula indicates that the list of 'minor judges' was from an official document, an impression conveyed also by the accurate length of their office in contrast to the preponderance of round numbers in Judges. Variations from this formula, such as 'there arose', used only of Tola (10.1) and Jair (verse 3), and 'to deliver Israel', used only of Tola (verse 1), betray the influence of the stories of the 'great judges', with which this list was now combined by the Deuteronomist. The influence of the 'minor judges' in the sacral confederacy of Israel, on the other hand, contributed to the Deuteronomic presentation of the 'great judges', whose work was rather local, as deliverers of all Israel, Jephthah combining both roles, and so suggesting a prototype for the other 'great judges', according to Noth's feasible view (see Introduction to Judges, pp. 209f.). The collection of the traditions of the 'great judges' by a

Shamir in the hill country of E'phraim. <sup>2</sup>And he judged Israel twenty-three years. Then he died, and was buried at Shamir.

3 After him arose Ja'ir the Gileadite, who judged Israel twenty-two years. <sup>4</sup>And he had thirty sons who rode on thirty asses; and they

pre-Deuteronomic compiler, however, within the framework of the divine contention and public fast at the amphictyonic assembly at the sacrament of the Covenant, had already elevated the local deliverers to national figures (see Introduction, pp. 207-209).

1. **After Abimelech:** it is uncertain whether the authority of Abimelech is here recognized among the 'minor judges', as the Vulgate assumes in regarding Tola as the son of the uncle of Abimelech. In view of the influence of the Deuteronomic compiler in the exceptional introduction to the notice of Tola, 'there arose to save Israel', 'after Abimelech' is probably also editorial, his reign being regarded as a symptom of backsliding (cf. 8.33-35) from which deliverance was necessary.

**Tola the son of Puah, son of Dodo, a man of Issachar:** Tola ('cochineal worm') and Puah ('red dye-madder') are names of clans of Issachar (Gen. 46.13; Num. 26.23; 1 Chr. 7.1), but clans were often called by the name of a reputed ancestor, whose name might recur in individuals of the clan; cf. Jair (verse 3) and Elon (12.11) and Ehud (see on 3.15). Dodo means literally 'his uncle' (so LXX and Vulgate) and is often used as the predicate in a theophoric name. This may be the significance here, the divine element having dropped out, as not infrequently.

**Shamir**, the seat of Tola, was in the hill country of Ephraim, which is here probably a geographical term rather than an ethnic one (see on Jos. 20.7). The hill country of Ephraim points to an unknown location for Shamir in the vicinity of the central sanctuary of Shechem, probably to the south.

3-5. **Jair the Gileadite:** Jair is given as a clan of Manasseh (Num. 32.41), and is probably another case of an individual named after the eponym of his clan. He is domiciled in Gilead and may therefore be of East Manasseh, where his tomb is noted at **Kamon** (verse 5), possibly the Kamon which Polybius notes with Pella (V, lxx, 12) in his account of the Seleucid wars, the name possibly surviving in Qamūn, c. 1½ miles W. of Irbid in north Transjordan.

4. **thirty sons:** indicative of his substance, reflected in his large harem, by which possibly he endeavoured to strengthen his influence throughout Israel (see on 12.9). **thirty asses:** indicative of the dignity of each (cf. 5.10, 12.14), which may be further indicated by their **thirty cities** (so correctly RSV, reading M.T. 'āyārīm ('ass-colts') as 'ārīm ('cities')). 'City' may indicate no more than a settlement with a watch-tower, as suggested by a possibly cognate word in Ugaritic. The 'thirty cities', however, may be a gloss suggested by Havvoth-jair ('the tent-agglomerations of Jair', see on Jos. 13.30), which is also part of the gloss suggested by the name of the East-Manassite Jair, as 'to this day' suggests.

had thirty cities, called Hav'voth-ja'ir to this day, which are in the land of Gilead. <sup>5</sup>And Ja'ir died, and was buried in Kamon.

6 And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Ba'als and the Ash'taroth, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammon-

#### THE JEPHTHAH TRADITIONS 10.6-12.7

##### 10.6-16.

The introductory framework to the deliverance of Jephthah by the pre-Deuteronomic compiler, who uses the conventional formula, noting the apostasy of Israel (verse 6) and the wrath of God (verse 7), particularized in the attacks of Ammon for eighteen years (verse 8), the repentance of Israel and appeal to God (verse 10), the divine contention (verses 11-14), the reiterated confession and appeal (verse 15) and rededication (verse 16a), and the relenting of God (verse 16b). The conventional introductory framework, however, is complicated by many accretions, e.g. the particularization of the gods of the various peoples to whom Israel apostatized (verse 6b), the extent of the Ammonite raids west of the Jordan (verse 9), and the expanded list of enemies from whom God in his contention claims to have delivered Israel, e.g. the Ammonites and the Philistines. Now the double menace of Ammonites and Philistines probably corresponds to historical fact, the Philistine pressure probably encouraging and making possible Ammonite raids over the Jordan, but deliverance from Ammonites and Philistines and others (verses 11-12) in the introduction to Jephthah's deliverance from Ammon, before God has even consented to the deliverance, is proleptic and definitely betrays the hand of the Deuteronomic compiler or redactor. Here the restrained pre-Deuteronomic framework to the collection of narratives of deliverance is expanded to Deuteronomic homily.

**6. Baals . . . Ashtaroth:** see on 2.11 and 13.

**the gods of Syria:** better 'Aram', the Aramaean tribes from the north Arabian steppe, who were penetrating the settled land of inland Syria about this time. From inscriptions from the Aramaean states of Syria in the 8th century they seem to have adopted Canaanite deities, their own contribution being possibly the cult of the Venus star Ahtar. The reference, however, as to the gods of Ammon and Moab, both perhaps astral deities, specifically the Venus star, and to the gods of the Philistines is vague and redactional generalization.

**the gods of Sidon:** these would be the gods of the Canaanite fertility-cult, Baal, Astarte, Anat, and Asherah the Mother-goddess, but also probably El, the head of the Canaanite pantheon, whose province was order among gods, and, as in the patriarchal narratives, among men, on the evidence of the Rās Shamra texts. Sidon is probably singled out as a Canaanite metropolis typical of Canaanite culture.

**the gods of Moab:** only one is known from the Old Testament, Chemosh

ites, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the LORD, and did not serve him. <sup>7</sup>And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the Ammonites, <sup>8</sup> and they crushed and oppressed the children of Israel that year. For eighteen years they oppressed all the people of Israel that were beyond the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. <sup>9</sup>And the Ammonites crossed the Jordan to fight also against Judah and against Benjamin and against the house of E'phraim; so that Israel was sorely distressed.

10 And the people of Israel cried to the LORD, saying, 'We have sinned against thee, because we have forsaken our God and have served the Ba'als.' <sup>11</sup>And the LORD said to the people of Israel, 'Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites, from the Ammonites and from the Philistines?' <sup>12</sup> The Sido'nians also, and

(1 Kg. 11.33; see on 11.24), who may now be attested in liturgical texts recently found at Rās Shamra as *kmt*, of whom, however, nothing is specified.

**the gods of the Philistines:** this is also a loose reference, nothing being known of these except Dagon (1 Sam. 5.1-7) and Baal-zebub (2 Kg. 1.2) (probably Baal-zebul), both Canaanite gods adopted by the Philistines on their settlement in Palestine.

**7. Philistines:** see on Jos. 13.2.

**8. crushed:** better 'shattered'. The word *rā'aš* closely resembles the following *rāšaš*, and dittography is suspected, but *rā'aš* is attested in the Canaanite dialect in the Amarna Tablets, in Aramaic, and occurs in the Old Testament, though only in one other place, Exod. 15.6.

**that year:** if original, this suggests that the passage is drawn from some annalistic source, possibly from a record at some central sanctuary, or perhaps kept by some authority of the sacral confederacy. It may reflect the regular office of Jephthah to be described in the sequel. 'Year', however, (*šānāh*) may be a dittograph of 'years' in the following phrase 'eighteen years' or a scribal corruption of 'time', lit. 'hour' (*šā'āh*), which LXX<sup>B</sup> reads here.

**the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead:** i.e. that taken from Sihon, the Amorite king of Heshbon.

**9. The Ammonites, like the Moabites on occasion** (3.13ff. and 2 Kg. 13.20), raid west of Jordan against Judah by el-Buqei'a (Plain of Achor, see on Jos. 7.24) and against Benjamin and Ephraim north and west of Jericho.

**11. Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites, from the Ammonites and from the Philistines?:** RSV supplies the verb, which



the Amal'ekites, and the Ma'onites, oppressed you; and you cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand.<sup>13</sup> Yet you have forsaken me and served other gods; therefore I will deliver you no more.<sup>14</sup> Go and cry to the gods whom you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress.'<sup>15</sup> And the people of Israel said to the LORD, 'We have sinned; do to us whatever seems good to thee; only deliver us, we pray thee, this day.'<sup>16</sup> So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD; and he became indignant over the misery of Israel.

17 Then the Ammonites were called to arms, and they encamped in Gilead; and the people of Israel came together, and they encamped at Mizpah.<sup>18</sup> And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said one to

is lacking in M.T. The deliverance from the Ammonites and from the Philistines is another difficulty, being in the future. Thus corruption of the text may be suspected here, with redactional expansion. We suggest that the required verb was *hiššaltikem*, which RSV evidently assumes. This might have been then corrupted to *šîḡônîm* (Sidonians), the first word in verse 12, which is also suspect, since the Sidonians are not known in Judges or elsewhere as enemies of Israel at this early time. Lagrange (*Le Livre des Juges*, 1903, p. 190) suggests that the original text re-echoed the Drama of Salvation in reading *he'lēlî 'et'kem* ('[did I not] bring you up?') after 'from the Egyptians', the rest of the verse with the mention of the various oppressors in verse 12 being redactional. The mention of the Philistines and the Amalekites is from the Deuteronomic redactor, anticipating the theme of Samuel. The 'Maonites' may be a scribal corruption of 'Midianites' (so LXX), though 2 Chr. 26.7 mentions 'Meunites' together with the Arabs as enemies of Uzziah, and Assyrian inscriptions mention 'Magan' in north Hejaz, of which Mā'an in Transjordan may be a survival.

#### *Prelude to the Story of Jephthah's Deliverance 17-18*

Anticipates Jephthah's appointment at the shrine of Mizpah in Gilead (11.4-11).

**17. the Ammonites . . . encamped in Gilead:** a definite locality as distinct from a district seems to be visualized, possibly Jebel Jal'ad c. 16 miles NW. of 'Ammān, or Khirbet Jal'ad north-east of es-Salt. The Ammonites were apprehensive of the expansion of Israelite colonization (cf. 12.4) from the west to the fertile upland plain of the Biq'a, which they valued, as is indicated by their settlements and watchtowers on the eastern edge of this plain (G. Landes, *op. cit.*). **Mizpah:** a sanctuary of the Transjordan tribes (verse 18; 11.4-11), but unidentified.

another, 'Who is the man that will begin to fight against the Ammonites? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.'

**11** Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior, but he was the son of a harlot. Gilead was the father of Jephthah. <sup>2</sup>And Gilead's wife also bore him sons; and when his wife's sons grew up, they thrust Jephthah out, and said to him, 'You shall not inherit in our father's house; for you are the son of another woman.' <sup>3</sup>Then Jephthah fled from his brothers, and dwelt in the land of Tob; and worthless fellows collected round Jephthah, and went raiding with him.

<sup>4</sup>After a time the Ammonites made war against Israel. <sup>5</sup>And when the Ammonites made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead

**18. Who is the man . . . ?**: the question may imply the seeking of an oracle at the sanctuary of Yahweh at Mizpah.

*Parenthetical Digression on Jephthah's Antecedents 11.1-3*

Perhaps cited from a hero-saga of Jephthah, but showing later influence; cf. the popular genealogy, which depicts Jephthah as the son of an individual Gilead (verses 1b-2).

**1. the Gileadite**: as the following genealogy indicates, this is taken as an ethnic rather than a geographical term (cf. 5.17, where, however, 'Gad' should probably be read).

**a mighty warrior**: this early mention of Jephthah's prowess may hint that fear of his domination was the motive for his expulsion.

**a harlot**: not a concubine or a *sadīka* wife like the mother of Abimelech (see on 8.31), but a public prostitute ('*iššāh zōnāh*'), hence Jephthah was of no legal standing.

**3. the land of Tob**: the steppes north-east of the eastern edge of the plateau of north Transjordan, occupied by Aramaean tribesmen, who were called in by the Ammonites against David (2 Sam. 10.6, 8).

**worthless**: lit. 'empty', better 'destitute' (see on 9.4).

*The Appointment of Jephthah 4-11*

A historical tradition, continued after the parenthesis of verses 1-3, from 10.17-18. But part of the narrative of the seeking of oracular guidance at Mizpah and the designation of Jephthah has dropped out since Jephthah is introduced in verse 5 as already designated as leader. Verse 4 is an editorial introduction after the parenthesis

went to bring Jephthah from the land of Tob; <sup>6</sup> and they said to Jephthah, 'Come and be our leader, that we may fight with the Ammonites.' <sup>7</sup> But Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, 'Did you not hate me, and drive me out of my father's house? Why have you come to me now when you are in trouble?' <sup>8</sup> And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, 'That is why we have turned to you now, that you may go with us and fight with the Ammonites, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.' <sup>9</sup> Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, 'If you bring me home again to fight with the Ammonites, and the LORD gives them over to me, I will be your head.' <sup>10</sup> And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, 'The LORD will be witness between us; we will surely do as you say.' <sup>11</sup> So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and leader over them; and Jephthah spoke all his words before the LORD at Mizpah.

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of verses 1-3. The sober and circumstantial narrative indicates a well-established historical tradition, probably preserved at the sanctuary of Mizpah. The appointment of Jephthah, like his negotiations with Ammon, indicates a sober account of his appointment to a regular office rather than the call to an act of deliverance, and probably reflects such official status. It is only on the eve of action that he receives an access of the spirit (verse 29), and here his call to leadership comes not from the access of the spirit but from the tribal elders of Gilead, though at the guidance of an oracle, and with them he firmly stipulates for the recognition of his authority. Jephthah must safeguard his authority in view of his social disadvantage and because he has not yet received the access of the spirit to command spontaneous support. The transaction is ratified at the sanctuary at Mizpah (verse 10 and particularly verse 11), recalling the convention of reading and depositing the terms of a covenant at a shrine (see General Introduction, p. 35).

**6. leader:** Hebrew *kāšîn*, cognate of Arabic *kādî* ('judge').

**8. the inhabitants of Gilead:** the wider district, and neither town nor tribe is implied here. Possibly strictly tribal self-consciousness had been largely effaced as the result of settlement by immigrants from various parts of Palestine west of Jordan, as 12.4 implies.

**11. spoke all his words before the LORD at Mizpah:** Mizpah was thus a central sanctuary of the various Israelite groups worshipping Yahweh east of Jordan, which gave the agreement its validity. All this implies a more regular office in the case of Jephthah than in that of any other judge, and indeed is reminiscent of the regularization of Saul's kingly office at the central sanctuary of Gilgal (1 Sam. 11.14-15).

12 The Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites and said, 'What have you against me, that you have come to me to fight against my land?' <sup>13</sup> And the king of the Ammonites answered the messengers of Jephthah, 'Because Israel on coming from Egypt took away my land, from the Arnon to the Jabbok and to the Jordan; now therefore restore it peaceably.' <sup>14</sup> And Jephthah sent messengers again to the king of the Ammonites <sup>15</sup> and said to him, 'Thus says Jephthah: Israel did not take away the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites, <sup>16</sup> but when they came up from Egypt, Israel went through the wilderness to the Red Sea and came to Kadesh. <sup>17</sup> Israel then sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, "Let us pass, we pray, through your land"; but the king of Edom would not listen. And they sent also to the king of Moab, but he would not consent. So Israel remained at Kadesh. <sup>18</sup> Then they journeyed through the wilderness, and went around the land of Edom and the land of Moab, and arrived on the east side of the land of Moab, and camped,

*Jephthah's Correspondence with the Ammonite King 12-28*

It has been noticed that all the localities mentioned in the alleged correspondence were not in Ammon, but in Moab, and that the reference to 'Chemosh your god' (verse 24) indicates that Jephthah was dealing with Moab. It is thus argued that he was involved in a war with Moab as well as the better-known war with Ammon, with which the sequel is concerned, but that details of the Moabite campaign have been lost. Nörscher (op. cit., p. 48) finds it natural that Moab should have supported Ammon against Israel. It is very doubtful, however, if more than the bare fact of Jephthah's negotiation with the Ammonite king is part of the historical tradition here. The appeal to the occupation of the former Amorite kingdom of Sihon by right of the sword and the strong reflection of the tradition of the occupation of the Promised Land (cf. Num. 20ff.; Dt. 2) rather indicates free adaptation by the Deuteronomic historian, though the 'three hundred years' occupation of the kingdom of Sihon agrees only very broadly with the schematic chronology of the Deuteronomic history (see further, General Introduction, pp. 3-7).

**12. my land:** Jephthah adopts the language best understood by the king of Ammon. The correspondence itself makes clear to the king of Ammon that the Israelites in Transjordan had a regular representative and leader.

**13. from the Arnon to the Jabbok and to the Jordan:** the Amorite kingdom of Sihon conquered from Moab before the Israelite settlement of Reuben and Gad (Jos. 13.15-28); cf. Jer. 48.45 and other passages *passim*, which incorporate laments

on the other side of the Arnon; but they did not enter the territory of Moab, for the Arnon was the boundary of Moab. <sup>19</sup> Israel then sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon; and Israel said to him, "Let us pass, we pray, through your land to our country." <sup>20</sup> But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory; so Sihon gathered all his people together, and encamped at Jahaz, and fought with Israel. <sup>21</sup> And the LORD, the God of Israel, gave Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they defeated them; so Israel took possession of all the land of the Amorites, who inhabited that country. <sup>22</sup> And they took possession of all the territory of the Amorites from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan. <sup>23</sup> So then the LORD, the God of Israel, dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel; and are you to take possession of them? <sup>24</sup> Will you not possess what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? And all that the LORD our God has dispossessed before us, we will possess. <sup>25</sup> Now are you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel, or did

from Moab from this earlier period. On Arnon (Wādī Mūjīb) and Jabbok (Nahr ez-Zerqā), about fifty miles farther north, see on Jos. 12.1-6. The Ammonites, always referred to by the tribal designation 'sons of Ammon', were settled generally east of this region, though they claimed the fertile upland plain of the Biq'a north of the modern village of Suweileh, having settlements of open villages protected by watchtowers of drystone walling on the higher ground along the eastern edge of this depression (G. Landes, *op. cit.*).

**19. Heshbon:** modern Ḥesbān, or the adjacent mound of el-'Āl (see on Jos. 9.10).

**20. did not trust Israel to pass through his territory:** perhaps rather on the analogy of Arabic 'did not give Israel safe-conduct . . .' (G. R. Driver, cited by C. A. Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 48).

**Jahaz:** see on Jos. 21.36.

**24. Chemosh:** the national god of Moab, known as such from the inscription of Mesha king of Moab (c. 830 B.C.) and from the theophoric names of Moabite kings. The composite divine name Athtar-Kemosh in Mesha's inscription indicates that Chemosh was manifest in the Venus star Athtar, whose title was 'the king' (*melek*). Thus it is likely that Milcom (actually *melek-ma*, 'the king'), known from the Old Testament specifically the god of Ammon, was another manifestation of Athtar, the Venus star, the brightest star in these latitudes, and venerated later by Nabataeans and Arabs.



he ever go to war with them?<sup>26</sup> While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages, and in Aro'er and its villages, and in all the cities that are on the banks of the Arnon, three hundred years, why did you not recover them within that time?<sup>27</sup> I therefore have not sinned against you, and you do me wrong by making war on me; the LORD, the Judge, decide this day between the people of Israel and the people of Ammon.'<sup>28</sup> But the king of the Ammonites did not heed the message of Jephthah which he sent to him.

29 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manas'seh, and passed on to Mizpah of Gilead and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed on to the Ammonites.<sup>30</sup> And

**26. Aroer:** the association with Heshbon may indicate the place of that name near 'Ammān (see on Jos. 13.24-28), while the mention of the Arnon may indicate Aroer (modern Khirbet 'Arā'ir) just north of the Wādī Mūjib (see on Jos. 12.2).

#### *The Ammonite Campaign 29-33*

**29. the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah:** his call to office (verses 4-11), though guided by an oracle, and his negotiations with the king of Ammon (verses 12-28) had been at human initiative. The moment of action is marked by divine initiative. In view of his systematic recruiting-march before he proceeded to attack, it seems as if this note on his accession of the spirit is introduced by the pre-Deuteronomic collector of the traditions of the exploits of the 'great judges' to bring the exploit of Jephthah into conformity with his presentation of the traditions of the other judges.

**he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and . . . Mizpah of Gilead, and . . . to the Ammonites:** after regularizing his call to office at the sanctuary of Mizpah (verse 11) Jephthah possibly returned to Tob, probably to organize his striking-force, the nucleus of which was doubtless his brigand band, which it would have been indiscreet to bring to the assembly at the sanctuary at Mizpah. His return, which is described from the north, is probably a recruiting-march.

**30. Jephthah made a vow to the LORD:** since this was, most naturally, before he proceeded against the Ammonites, and was entered into at the sanctuary at Mizpah, 'to the Ammonites' in verse 29 is proleptic. The vow may have been occasioned by the disappointing response to his recruiting-march, but by its specified formula **If thou wilt give the Ammonites into my hand . . .** it serves the purpose of the collector to emphasize the divine part in the deliverance. The historical tradition is interwoven with the story of the vow and its discharge (verses 34-39a), which is related aetiologically to the cult-mourning of the virgins on the mountains (verses 39b-40). There was probably a historical basis for the

Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, 'If thou wilt give the Ammonites into my hand, <sup>31</sup> then whoever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites, shall be the LORD's, and I will offer him up for a burnt offering.' <sup>32</sup> So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them; and the LORD gave them into his hand. <sup>33</sup> And he smote them from Aro'er to the neighbourhood of Minnith, twenty cities, and as far as Abel-keramim, with a very great slaughter. So the Ammonites were subdued before the people of Israel.

34 Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah; and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; she

tradition of the vow and its tragic discharge (cf. 1 Sam. 1.11), but this tradition was appropriated in explanation of the mourning-rite, which was originally probably quite independent of such historical associations.

**31. whoever:** var. 'whatever', but M.T. is patient of both translations. A person of Jephthah's household may be visualized; cf. Mesha's sacrifice of his eldest son (2 Kg. 3.26-27) as an expression of the total commitment of the subject into the hand of his god.

**32. crossed over to the Ammonites:** note that Jephthah advanced against the Ammonites *after* his vow (cf. verse 29 and note on verse 30).

**33. from Aroer:** probably that near 'Ammān (Jos. 13.25).

**Minnith:** location uncertain, but probably south of 'Ammān, as Eusebius suggests. **Abel-keramim** ('Stream of the Vineyards'): location unknown.

**twenty cities:** it is uncertain whether this refers to places between Aroer and Minnith, which in this case would be more distant than Eusebius suggests, or to the total number of places captured in the war. In view of the quite small settlements designated as places, this is a limited gain and represents the successful result of a frontier affair. These 'cities', or fortified settlements, probably included the Ammonite villages with their round watchtowers on the eastern side of the Biq'a, which probably now passed into Israelite hands and were the major acquisition of the war.

#### *The Discharge of Jephthah's Vow 11.34-40*

A historical tradition adapted as an aetiological legend explaining a local fertility-rite (verses 37-40) (see on verse 30).

**34. his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances:** cf. Miriam and the women in Exod. 15.20 and the women on the triumphant return of Saul and David (1 Sam. 18.6ff.). They also sang, probably antiphonally (1 Sam. 18.7). Timbrels were properly small drums.

was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter.<sup>35</sup> And when he saw her, he rent his clothes, and said, 'Alas, my daughter! you have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of great trouble to me; for I have opened my mouth to the LORD, and I cannot take back my vow.'<sup>36</sup> And she said to him, 'My father, if you have opened your mouth to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone forth from your mouth, now that the LORD has avenged you on your enemies, on the Ammonites.'<sup>37</sup> And she said to her father, 'Let this thing be done for me; let me alone two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I

**his only child:** the Hebrew is very emphatic on this point. With her his name died and he was utterly extinct.

**35. rent his clothes:** a conventional expression of grief in the ancient East, probably a modification of the rending of the skin, graphically attested as a mourning-rite in the Rās Shamra texts.

**brought me very low:** lit. 'brought me to my knees', i.e. 'enervated me'. The consonants, however, in a different order, may indicate 'thou hast brought trouble upon me'.

**you have become the cause of great trouble to me:** this should probably be retained notwithstanding variant readings of the Greek and Latin versions ('thou art a stumbling-block in my eyes'). Jephthah's life had been clouded by the hostility of his legitimate kindred, who had forced him to lead a turbulent life among brigands. Now that he is restored with honour, his own daughter is the unwitting cause of his undoing. The Arabic cognate of the Hebrew verb 'to trouble' (used also in Jos. 7.24-26) means 'to foul water with mud'.

**37. that I may go and wander upon the mountains:** so probably correctly RSV for M.T., 'that I may go and go down' (RSV *w'raḏti* for M.T. *w'yāraḏti*). The verb *raḏ*, 'to wander, be restless', is rare, but attested in Jer. 2.31, and probably in Ps. 55.2 (M.T. 3).

**bewail my virginity:** in the narrative this implies mourning that she should die before wedding and motherhood. Virginity, however, may have been suggested by a fertility-rite which had its prototype in the mourning of the goddess Anat (whose stock epithet in the Rās Shamra texts is 'the Virgin') for the dead Baal in the Canaanite fertility-cult, which is actually described in the Rās Shamra Baal-myth:

'Anat too goes and ranges  
Every mountain in the heart of the land,  
Every hill in the midst of the fields. . . '

and my companions.' <sup>38</sup>And he said, 'Go.' And he sent her away for two months; and she departed, she and her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. <sup>39</sup>And at the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had made. She had never known a man. And it became a custom in Israel <sup>40</sup> that the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.

**12** The men of E'phraim were called to arms, and they crossed to Zaphon and said to Jephthah, 'Why did you cross over to fight against the Ammonites, and did not call us to go with you?

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The historicization of this fertility-rite may be a deliberate attempt to gloss it over, or it may be a more artless assimilation after the real significance of the rite had been forgotten. The part of women in such ritual at transitional seasons may be noted; cf. the role of Anat and other females at such junctures in the myths and legends of Rās Shamra and of the women in Jerusalem who wept for Tammuz in Jerusalem (Ezek. 8.14) and those who mourned for Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo (Zech. 12.11).

#### *The Rivalry of Ephraim and Gilead 12.1-6*

The similarity of this incident, at least in the beginning, to the incident in 8.1-3 has suggested to certain scholars since Wellhausen (e.g. most recently Alt and Täubler) that the incident is secondary here, suggested by 8.1-3. The motif of the emulation of Ephraim apart, the two passages are markedly different, especially in their conclusion, and the Shibboleth incident seems too circumstantial not to be genuine, while the saying of the gleaning of Ephraim and the vintage of Abiezer (8.2) must surely be related to the aftermath to Gideon's victory over the Midianites. Both probably reflect the aspirations of Ephraim, later expressed in her hegemony under Samuel, and already probably the home of the Ark at Shiloh. There may, however, be a fusion of traditions in the ostensible cause of the quarrel, the exclusion of Ephraim from the exploit in Transjordan (verse 1; cf. 8.1). The real reason for the drastic action of Ephraim was possibly the suspicion of a judge of Israel who should reside in Transjordan (so Hertzberg, *op. cit.*, p. 218) and have such scope for independent action. This may be an adumbration of the attitude of Ephraim with Samuel to the authority of Saul.

**1. were called to arms:** lit. 'were called'.

**to Zaphon:** so RSV after certain mss. of LXX and the Old Latin version, which is preferable to AV 'northward'. Zaphon was north of Succoth, east of Jordan, near the mouth of the Jabbok, according to Jos. 13.27.

We will burn your house over you with fire.' <sup>2</sup>And Jephthah said to them, 'I and my people had a great feud with the Ammonites; and when I called you, you did not deliver me from their hand. <sup>3</sup>And when I saw that you would not deliver me, I took my life in my hand, and crossed over against the Ammonites, and the LORD gave them into my hand; why then have you come up to me this day, to fight against me?' <sup>4</sup>Then Jephthah gathered all the men of Gilead and fought with E'phraim; and the men of Gilead smote E'phraim, because they said, 'You are fugitives of E'phraim, you Gileadites, in the midst of E'phraim and Manas'sah.' <sup>5</sup>And the Gileadites took the fords of the Jordan against the E'phraimites. And when any of the fugitives of E'phraim said, 'Let me go over,' the men of Gilead said to him, 'Are you an E'phraimite?' When he said, 'No,' <sup>6</sup>they said to him, 'Then say Shibboleth,' and he said, 'Sibboleth,' for he could not pronounce it right; then they seized him and slew him at the fords of

**2. my people:** better 'my kindred' (Hebrew *'ammî*). See on 5.14.

**I called you:** this appeal is not previously mentioned, but is possibly implied in the extremity in which Jephthah made his desperate vow (see on 11.29).

**3. I took my life in my hand:** lit. 'I put my life in my hand', the regular idiom for the supreme risk, but, in view of the ancient Hebrew conception of the survival of a man in his family, this had particular point in Jephthah's sacrifice of his only daughter.

**come up:** a technical term 'to attack' (see on Jos. 22.12).

**4. gathered:** indicates some time after the end of the Ammonite campaign, when Jephthah had settled in Mizpah (11.34).

**because they said, 'You are fugitives from Ephraim, you Gileadites, in the midst of Ephraim and Manasseh':** though East Manasseh was settled from the west, there is no reference except here to a settlement of Ephraimites in Trans-jordan. The omission of the words in certain mss. of LXX suggests that they may be repeated by a scribal error from verse 5, 'when any of the fugitives of Ephraim said', with subsequent adjustment of the corrupt text. The fact that the word translated 'fugitives' (*p'liṭē*) means 'survivors' supports this explanation of the text.

**5. against the Ephraimites:** the preposition introduces the dative of disadvantage, as in 3.28 and 7.24.

**6. Shibboleth:** lit. 'ear of corn'. The difference in the pronunciation of the sibilant, which corresponds to the variation in Hebrew and Arabic, indicates the piecemeal nature of the Hebrew settlement and the local independence of the tribes.



the Jordan. And there fell at that time forty-two thousand of the E'phraimites.

7 Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died, and was buried in his city in Gilead.

8 After him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. <sup>9</sup> He had thirty sons; and thirty daughters he gave in marriage outside his clan, and thirty daughters he brought in from outside for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years. <sup>10</sup> Then Ibzan died, and was buried at Bethlehem.

11 After him Elon the Zeb'ulunite judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years. <sup>12</sup> Then Elon the Zeb'ulunite died, and was buried at Ai'jalon in the land of Zeb'un.

**forty-two thousand:** evident exaggeration. 'Forty' is the conventional indefinite number of saga and folk-legend, and 'two' may be added to give the semblance of verisimilitude. 'Forty-two' occurs with this significance in the story of Elisha and the rude children of Bethel (2 Kg. 2.24), Jehu's slaughter of the royal family of Judah (2 Kg. 10.14), and is the number of the months of the reign of the beast in Rev. 13.5. The number has the same significance as 'fifty siller bells and nine' in ballads of the Scottish Border.

7. On the significance of the obituary on Jephthah, like that of the 'minor judges', which office Jephthah also filled, see Introduction to Judges, pp. 209f. The name of the place where he was buried is, surprisingly, omitted, and LXX reads 'in his city in Gilead', whence RSV translation. Josephus apparently knew a reading which was a corruption of 'in Mizpah in Gilead'.

*List of the 'Minor Judges' 12.8-15 (continued from 10.1-5, 12.7)*

See Introduction, pp. 209f.

8. The name **Ibzan** is not otherwise attested, and, as certain MSS of LXX suggest, may be **Abisan** or **Abeşan**. It is not stated whether **Bethlehem** was the well-known Bethlehem of Judah or Bethlehem of Zebulun (Jos. 19.15) in the Galilean foothills, c. 7 miles WSW. of Nazareth. Josephus understood it to be in Judah.

9. Ibzan's policy of exogamy for his numerous family was probably designed to increase his influence as judge of the sacral confederacy by as wide a connection as possible. His large family indicates a large harem, probably on the same principle. The notice of large families is a notable feature of the passages on the 'minor judges' (cf. 10.4, 12.14).

11. **Elon:** the name of a clan in Zebulun (Gen. 46.14; Num. 26.26); cf. Tola of Issachar (10.1) and Jair of Manasseh (10.3-5), possibly a case of the recurrence of

13 After him Abdon the son of Hillel the Pir'athonite judged Israel. 14 He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy asses; and he judged Israel eight years. 15 Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pir'athonite died, and was buried at Pir'athon in the land of E'phraim, in the hill country of the Amal'ekites.

**13** And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

the name of the eponymous ancestor in the clan. The settlement was named after the clan, **Aijalon** being simply a different vocalization of **Elon**. This **Aijalon** in **Zebulun** must be distinguished from **Aijalon** in the foothills of the hill country of **Ephraim**.

**13. Abdon . . . the Pirathonite:** like **Ibzan**, **Abdon** is designated only by his local, and not by his tribal, affinities. The **Pirathonite** suggests the ancient site by the modern village of **Far'ata**, c. 8 miles SW. of **Nāblus**, as is indicated by its location in **Ephraim** (verse 14).

**14. forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy asses:** 'forty' and 'seventy' are round numbers and suggest popular amplification of the historical notice. The historical nucleus of the tradition, however, may be the large harem of the judge; cf. on verse 9 and 10.4. Alternatively, the 'forty', 'thirty', or 'seventy' persons given as the judges' families may be persons associated with them in regional justice, as in the case of **Samuel** (1 Sam. 7.15-17, 8.1-2).

**15. in the hill country of the Amalekites:** this is almost certainly a corruption. Certain MSS. of **LXX** read 'in the hill country of **Ephraim** in the land of **Sellem**'.

#### THE SAMSON CYCLE 13.1-16.31

See Introduction, pp. 232ff.

#### *The Deuteronomic Introduction 13.1*

**the Philistines:** see on Jos. 13.2. In the sequel the **Philistines** do not appear to have been on the offensive, but their control of the western foothills limited Hebrew settlement and provoked frontier incidents and reprisals. It is not certain that such conditions antedate the **Danite** migration to the north, and the reference to the 'clan', or 'kinship', and not the 'tribe' of **Dan** (verse 2) may indicate that the migration of the tribe had already taken place, leaving behind only such as had admitted intercourse with the **Philistines** (cf. chapter 14).

**forty years:** cf. the twenty years of **Samson's** career (15.20, 16.31), which

2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Mano'ah; and his wife was barren and had no children. <sup>3</sup> And the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, 'Behold, you are barren and have no children; but you shall conceive and bear a son. <sup>4</sup> Therefore beware, and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, <sup>5</sup> for lo, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall

indicates that the Deuteronomic history visualized no break between Judges and Samuel, Samuel also being regarded as a judge (see further, verse 5).

*The Tradition of Samson's Birth (from the Samson hero-legend) 2-8*

The motif of the birth of a hero to a hitherto barren woman who is the recipient of special revelation is a familiar motif of hero-legend, e.g. Rebekah, Rachel, Sarah, Hannah, Elizabeth. Such special revelation involves the revelation of a special destiny or commission (verse 5); cf. the case of Jeremiah (Jer. 1.5) and the Servant of the Lord in Isa. 49.1-3. The tradition of the birth of the hero Samson is elaborated to emphasize the institution of the Nazirites.

**2. Zorah:** see on Jos. 15.33-36. In view of the connection of the name Samson with Shemesh (the sun) and the possible historification of a solar myth, at least in part of the Samson cycle, see on 16.21f. and Introduction to Judges, pp. 234f. The proximity of Samson's home to Bethshemesh ('the Shrine of the Sun') is significant. **the tribe of the Danites:** so RSV, but better 'kinship' (*mišpāḥāh*) (see on verse 1). **Manoah:** this name, which is probably connected with the clan of the Manahathites, associated with Zorah in 1 Chr. 2.54, may be another case of the recurrence of the name of the eponymous ancestor of the clan (cf. Tola (10.1), Elon (12.11), and Ehud (3.15)), or it may be a reconstruction of an editor of the tradition on the basis of the association of the Manahathite clan with Zorah.

**4.** The dedication of the hero begins from his mother's womb (verse 5; cf. Jer. 1.5; Isa. 49.1), and is signaled by her observance of the same abstinence from wine and fermented drink as will be incumbent on the boy when he is born.

**unclean:** here the application is apparently only to food and not to contact. There is no explicit prohibition of food for Nazirites except grapes, fresh or dried (Num. 6.3); cf. verse 14 ('anything that comes from the vine'). The regulations for Nazirites (Num. 6.1-21) are from P, but probably conserve an earlier tradition. We may note that it is the mother here who observes these regulations. Samson's drinking-feast in 14.10 does not indicate abstinence, though to be sure it is not said that he himself drank.

**5. No razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God:** this is a regulation for the Nazirite also in Num. 6.5. In verse 7 it is stated

be a Nazirite to God from birth; and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines.' <sup>6</sup> Then the woman came and told her husband, 'A man of God came to me, and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible; I did not ask him whence he was, and he did not tell me his name; <sup>7</sup> but he said to me, "Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son; so then drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from birth to the day of his death."'

<sup>8</sup> Then Mano'ah entreated the LORD, and said, 'O LORD, I pray thee, let the man of God whom thou didst send come again to us, and teach us what we are to do with the boy that will be born.' <sup>9</sup> And God listened to the voice of Mano'ah, and the angel of God came again to the woman as she sat in the field; but Mano'ah her husband was not with her. <sup>10</sup> And the woman ran in haste and told her husband, 'Behold, the man who came to me the other day has appeared to me.' <sup>11</sup> And Mano'ah arose and went after his wife, and

that Samson was to be a Nazirite for life. Num. 6.1-21 prescribes for temporary Naziriteship, after which the hair was cut and burnt in the sanctuary (Num. 6.18). Among primitives the hair, as part of the person, is considered to represent him, e.g. in pre-Islamic times the cutting off of the forelock among the Arabs was a substitute for the killing of prisoners of war, who might then be used as slaves. Etymologically Nazirite is connected with *nāḏar* ('to vow').

**he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines:** this indicates the awareness on the part of the Deuteronomic compiler that Samson's work was not conclusive, but merely a prelude to the wars against the Philistines under Samuel, and is an indication of his hand in the transmission of the tradition.

**6. A man of God:** actually, in M.T., 'the man of God', perhaps a scribal inadvertency under the influence of the definite article in verse 8. The definite article may denote a single person present to the mind under given circumstances (GK, §126qff.). The phrase naturally suggests a prophet, who was apprehended as an extension of the divine personality, hence an angel (verse 9ff.) and God himself (verse 22) (see on 6.11). The fact that the woman did not ask him who he was or whence he came indicates her impression that this was a divine visitation.

**8.** This serves as a bridge between the birth of the hero and the theophany which authenticates the rock-altar of Zorah (verses 9-23). This is indicated by the fact that no new instructions sought by Manoah are given concerning the hero, and those concerning his wife are simply reiterated. On the contrary, a sacrifice is demanded (verse 16) on the place of the theophany.

came to the man and said to him, 'Are you the man who spoke to this woman?' And he said, 'I am.'<sup>12</sup> And Mano'ah said, 'Now when your words come true, what is to be the boy's manner of life, and what is he to do?'<sup>13</sup> And the angel of the LORD said to Mano'ah, 'Of all that I said to the woman let her beware.<sup>14</sup> She may not eat of anything that comes from the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, or eat any unclean thing; all that I commanded her let her observe.'

15 Mano'ah said to the angel of the LORD, 'Pray, let us detain you, and prepare a kid for you.'<sup>16</sup> And the angel of the LORD said to Mano'ah, 'If you detain me, I will not eat of your food; but if you make ready a burnt offering, then offer it to the LORD.' (For Mano'ah did not know that he was the angel of the LORD.)<sup>17</sup> And Mano'ah said to the angel of the LORD, 'What is your name, so that, when your words come true, we may honour you?'<sup>18</sup> And the angel of the LORD said to him, 'Why do you ask my name, seeing it is

*The Tradition of Samson's Birth continued in the Context of the Aetiological Myth of the Rock-altar of Zorah 9-25 (cf. 6.11-24)*

**12. the boy's manner of life:** Hebrew *mišpāṭ* denotes the orderly government or training of the boy.

**what he is to do:** the task for which he was dedicated.

**16. burnt offering:** Hebrew *'ōlāh*, a sacrifice with effusion of blood offered wholly to God as distinct from communion offerings (*š'lanīm*), of which both God and the community partake. The occasion here was nothing short of the dedication of the place of the theophany as an altar.

**17. The name,** whereby the presence of God could be invoked, is not disclosed; cf. in the case of Jacob at the Jabbok (Gen. 32.29) and Moses at the burning bush (Exod. 3.13-14). This in itself indicated that the angel represented one whose fullness was never exhausted by any revelation so that he could become controlled by man. God cannot be expressed but only addressed.

**18. wonderful:** such a passage concerning the dedication of the place of a theophany usually contains the name of the place in terms of the revelation. The repetition of 'wonderful' in verse 19 indicates that the altar at Zorah was dedicated to 'Yahweh who works wondrously' (reading the definite article before the participle in M.T. instead of the conjunction). The word *pele'* ('wonder') denotes the immediate activity of God to a certain end which seems to transcend the limits of the natural processes, and hence is of the dimension of the miraculous.



wonderful?' <sup>19</sup> So Mano'ah took the kid with the cereal offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD, to him who works wonders. <sup>20</sup> And when the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar while Mano'ah and his wife looked on; and they fell on their faces to the ground.

<sup>21</sup> The angel of the LORD appeared no more to Mano'ah and to his wife. Then Mano'ah knew that he was the angel of the LORD. <sup>22</sup> And Mano'ah said to his wife, 'We shall surely die, for we have seen God.' <sup>23</sup> But his wife said to him, 'If the LORD had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and a cereal offering at our hands, or shown us all these things, or now announced to us such things as these.' <sup>24</sup> And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson; and the boy grew, and the LORD blessed him. <sup>25</sup> And the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him in Ma'haneh-dan, between Zorah and Esh'ta-ol.

**19. the kid with the cereal offering:** lit. 'the kid and the [cereal] offering'. This may denote the kid as the actual offering, 'and' being explicative (see GK, §154, n. b), or it may reflect later usage when a cereal offering accompanied the bloody offering.

**the rock:** so far not mentioned, this probably refers to a well-known rock-altar at Zorah.

**to him who works wonders:** so RSV, reading *ham-mapi' la'šôl*, the name of the altar (see on verse 18), and omitting M.T. 'and Manoah and his wife saw', which is inadvertently repeated here by the scribe from verse 20.

**20.** The moment of conviction in the theophany is associated here as in 6.21 with fire (cf. Exod. 3.2-6; Lev. 9.24; 1 Kg. 18). In 6.21, however, the fire was kindled when the angel's staff touched the food; here it is not said by whom, or how, the fire was kindled, which is associated with the sudden disappearance of the angel.

**22. We shall surely die, for we have seen God:** cf. 6.22.

**23. and a cereal offering:** probably redactional, reflecting the later usage of the cereal offering as the regular concomitant of sacrifice (see on verse 19).

**24. Samson:** after LXX and Vulgate; cf. Hebrew *šimšôn*. The name is unique in the Old Testament and is connected with Hebrew *šemeš* ('sun'). The association of Samson with Zorah two miles from Beth-shemesh ('the Shrine of the Sun') is unlikely to be fortuitous. On the possibility of the historification of a solar myth, at least in part of the Samson tradition, see General Introduction, pp. 234f, and on 16.21, 22.

**25. the spirit of the LORD began to stir him:** the active beginning of Samson's

**14** Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines.<sup>2</sup> Then he came up, and told his father and mother, 'I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah; now get her for me as my wife.'<sup>3</sup> But his father and

life's work is marked by the moving of the spirit of God. The verb *pi'ēm* is used of the agitation of a man's spirit by a disquieting dream (Gen. 41.8; Dan. 2.1).

**Mahaneh-dan:** the place is located apparently west of Kiriath-jearim in 18.12, where its name is derived from a station in the northward migration of Dan. Here a different site is visualized in the valley between Zorah and Eshtaol, which are some two miles apart. The difficulty of two places associated with the same folk-group about eight miles apart has suggested to S. A. Cook the emendation 'Manahath-dan' (cf. verse 2 and 1 Chr. 2.52, 54, which mentions Manahathites of Zorah and Kiriath-jearim). The etymology in 18.12 supports the reading 'Mahaneh' ('camp'), and Alt suggests that the two places of this name in the valley by Beth-shemesh and up in the hills by Kiriath-jearim may be a relic of the seasonal migrations of the group of Dan in the early days of the settlement when they were semi-nomads ('Erwägungen über die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina', KS I, 1953, p. 152). Notwithstanding, the similar vowels to Manahathites of 1 Chr. 2.52, 54, and to Manoah the father of Samson and the association of M.T. 'Mahaneh-dan' and Manahathites of 1 Chr. 2.52, 54, with Zorah and Eshtaol and with Kiriath-jearim suggests that Mahaneh-dan was a corruption of an original gentilic term the significance of which had been forgotten since the migration of the groups of Dan from the district in which they had probably not stayed long.

#### *Samson and the Woman of Timnah 14.1-20*

From the hero-legend of Samson, the occasion of certain exploits against the Philistines, anticipated in the apologetic note of the Deuteronomist in verse 4, where to the objection of his parents to the union with a Philistine woman it is added that 'they did not know that it was from the Lord, for he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines'.

#### *Samson's Choice of the Woman 1-4*

**1. Timnah:** Khirbet Tibneh about four miles from Zorah lower down the Wādī eṣ-Ṣarār and on the south side of the valley; cf. Jos. 15.10, 19.43, where its inclusion in Dan is secondary to its inclusion in Judah in Jos. 15.10, which reflects the administrative divisions of Judah in Solomon's time, with subsequent modifications.

**2. get her for me as my wife:** marriage is a matter for arrangement between the respective families, as still in Arab society.

**3. and his mother:** this may be an addition, cf. M.T. 'my people', but RSV

mother said to him, 'Is there not a woman among the daughters of your kinsmen, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?' But Samson said to his father, 'Get her for me; for she pleases me well.'

4 His father and mother did not know that it was from the LORD, for he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

5 Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and he came to the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion roared against him; <sup>6</sup> and the Spirit of the LORD came

retains and reads **our people** (cf. LXX (Lagarde) and the Syriac version 'your people').

**uncircumcised:** a regular stigma of the Philistines in the Old Testament (cf. 15.18; 1 Sam. 14.6, etc.). The rite was general among the Semitic peoples and the Egyptians, possibly originally relating to puberty (cf. Exod. 4.25) and ripeness for marriage and military service, hence membership of the religious community. If we may credit the tradition in Gen. 34.22-24, the inhabitants of Shechem in the patriarchal period did not practise the rite, possibly indicating that they were not of Semitic stock, but probably Hurrian (so LXX for 'Hivite', Gen. 34.2).

4. An apologetic note by the Deuteronomic compiler, reconciling the tradition of Samson's affiance with the Philistines with that of his exploits against them as one of the champions of Israel.

#### *Samson's Exploit with the Lion and his Riddle at the Marriage Feast 5-20*

The occasion was ostensibly that of the betrothal feast, the marriage corresponding to a *ṣadiqa* marriage among the Arabs, where the wife continued to live in her father's house, being visited periodically by the husband with a gift for her maintenance (cf. 15.1). It is hard, however, to visualize the incident of the lion happening without the knowledge of the parents in such open country with no other cover than the trailing vines on the gentle slopes of the Wādī eṣ-Ṣarār, and it is therefore likely that the mention of the parents in verse 5 is secondary. There is here possibly a telescoping of the tradition of the slaying of the lion and that of the betrothal of Samson, at which his parents would be present.

6. **the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him:** lit. 'leapt upon him', as a lion on its prey. This expresses simply Samson's phenomenal access of physical strength and courage, also considered to be of the influence of God beyond the natural force of man, as the heroic impulse to lead and hazard all in God's cause, the wisdom of the sage, the technical insight and skill of the artisan or artist, the insight and courage of the prophet, the frenzy of the dervish, and even the madness by which God makes one 'another man'.

mightily upon him, and he tore the lion asunder as one tears a kid; and he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. <sup>7</sup> Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. <sup>8</sup> And after a while he returned to take her; and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and behold, there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion, and honey. <sup>9</sup> He scraped it out into his hands, and went on, eating as he went; and he came to his father and mother, and gave some to them, and they ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the carcass of the lion.

10 And his father went down to the woman, and Samson made a

**lion:** lions are familiar to Biblical writers as not uncommon in Palestine, e.g. Amos, Jeremiah, etc., though rather associated with remoter regions such as the jungle by the immediate banks of the Jordan. They were found as late as the Middle Ages, when Usāma ibn Munqid of Shayzār, the contemporary of Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn, hunted them in the Orontes valley.

**he tore the lion asunder as one tears a kid:** i.e. as a carcass is still divided at an Arab guest-meal. The same verb (*kissa'*) is used of the tearing open of a sacrificial dove by the wings in Lev. 1.17. For this action Burney (op. cit., p. 401) cites the motif of a bull-man rending a lion by the hind legs in a Mesopotamian seal (op. cit., Pl. II, fig. 4) and the crude sculpture of a giant figure, possibly Heracles as Phoenician Baal-Melqart, so rending a lion in a piece from Cyprus (op. cit., Pl. VI). The tradition may have been influenced by the motif of Gilgamesh as a tamer of lions, well known in Mesopotamian sculpture, but the myth of Heracles is another possible source, mediated possibly by Mycenaean settlers on the coast, possibly at Jaffa, in the end of the Bronze Age (see Introduction to Judges, p. 235).

**8. he returned to take her:** if this is original it visualizes the marriage after the betrothal, but in view of the journey with his father to Timnah for the actual wedding (verse 10), this may be a clumsy gloss.

**after a while:** this was necessary for the carcass to be reduced by jackals, flies, and ants to a skeleton. The bees must also have had time to build a honeycomb. The text emphasizes that it was no passing swarm. The word for 'swarm' (Hebrew *'ēḏāh*) is that used technically, particularly in P, for the religious community, EVV 'congregation' (see on 20.1).

**10. a feast:** lit. 'a drinking party'.

**for so the young men used to do:** this is possibly introduced to explain the apparent incongruity of Samson, a Nazirite, to whom wine was banned, giving a drinking party.

feast there; for so the young men used to do. <sup>11</sup>And when the people saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him. <sup>12</sup>And Samson said to them, 'Let me now put a riddle to you; if you can tell me what it is, within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty festal garments; <sup>13</sup> but if you cannot tell me what it is, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty festal garments.' And they said to him, 'Put your riddle, that we may hear it.' <sup>14</sup>And he said to them,

**11. when the people saw him:** possibly with LXX, with a slight change of consonants, 'because they feared him' (but see note following).

**they brought thirty companions to be with him:** the bridegroom's attendants are a regular feature of peasant marriage in the ancient and modern Semitic world (cf. Mt. 9.15), but are from his own community. In this case the marriage with a Philistine girl and a *ṣadiqa* association may explain why Samson had no attendants from his own community. The abnormally large number may have been complimentary to Samson, but it may be explained by the LXX reading, 'because they feared him', anticipating the sequel. One of these was especially attached to the bridegroom (verse 20) as chief negotiator and master of ceremonies (cf. Jn 3.29).

**12. put a riddle:** the verb is denominative from *ḥiḏāh* ('riddle'), used only here and in Ezek. 17.2, where it introduces not a brief figurative saying or a proverb but a parable. The riddle (*ḥiḏāh*) is usually, as here, figurative and was often used as a test of natural ingenuity in diplomatic encounters (1 Kg. 10.1). Such tests of wits are a feature of social life in non-literate societies, as among the Arab peasants and Bedouin and formerly in thecrofting communities in the Scottish Highlands. At the wedding of Samson it was of a piece with the earthy and even obscene innuendoes familiar still among the Arab peasantry.

**the seven days of the feast:** this is still the statutory duration of the wedding ceremony among the Arab peasants (so also Gen. 29.27).

**thirty linen garments:** these are not further defined, but in conjunction with the sequel denote possibly a light undergarment like the long shirt of the Arabs (*kamis*). **festal garments:** Hebrew *ḥ<sup>a</sup>lipôt b'ṣāḏīm*. The first word means, generally, 'change' or 'succession', e.g. Job 14.14; cf. Arabic *ḥalīfa* (Caliph), i.e. successor, and in this case the reference might be to changes from working clothing. The word might be cognate, however, with an Akkadian verb 'to cover', and refer to the overcloak (Arabic *abāya*) of heavier dark cloth, often very fine with embroidery. Such gifts of clothing were valued (2 Kg. 5.5).

**13.** The battle of wits was accentuated by the bet.

**14.** The riddle is set in the characteristic parallelism of Hebrew poetry. In this case, however, the one half of the couplet complicates the other instead of eluci-



'Out of the eater came something to eat.

Out of the strong came something sweet.'

And they could not in three days tell what the riddle was.

15 On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, 'Entice your husband to tell us what the riddle is, lest we burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us here to impoverish us?'

16 And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, 'You only hate me, you do not love me; you have put a riddle to my countrymen, and you have not told me what it is.' And he said to her, 'Behold, I have not told my father nor my mother, and shall I tell you?' 17 She wept before him the seven days that their feast lasted; and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him hard. Then she told the riddle to her countrymen. 18 And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

'What is sweeter than honey?

What is stronger than a lion?'

And he said to them,

'If you had not ploughed with my heifer,

you would not have found out my riddle.'

dating it if the hearers had no clue to the particular reference. The latter half might relate, as they would expect, to the virility of Samson in the sexual act, but far from being a clue it threw the hearers off the scent. It was an unfair riddle and deserved the response it elicited. The riddle to the 'companions of the bridegroom' may be a modification of an earlier practice of a contest to prove the bridegroom's strength and to conserve the tradition of marriage by force, which survives in the colloquial Arabic phrase for marriage *ḥaṭṭel-bint* ('snatching the bride').

**15. on the fourth day:** so RSV after LXX and the Syriac version for M.T. 'seventh'. This punctuation of the seven days may be in the saga convention; cf. the Rās Shamra legend of King Krt, where the king on his 'seven days' journey to the home of the bride breaks it to make a vow at the shrine of the mother-goddess on the third day. The threat of arson is the same as in the case of the Ephraimites and Jephthah (12.1).

**Entice:** the Hebrew verb (*pāṭāh*, intensive-causative), used also of Delilah's wheedling of Samson (16.5), means to stultify, make a simpleton of, to circumvent a man's wisdom (1 Kg. 22.20) or to seduce a woman (Exod. 22.16).

**to impoverish:** lit. to possess by dispossessing, the verb, here intensive, regularly used in the causative of the Hebrew occupation of Canaan.

**18. before the sun went down:** this seems a natural expression, the new day

<sup>19</sup>And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he went down to Ash'kelon and killed thirty men of the town, and took their spoil and gave the festal garments to those who had told the riddle. In hot anger he went back to his father's house. <sup>20</sup>And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

**15** After a while, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson went to visit his wife with a kid; and he said, 'I will go in to my wife in the chamber.' But her father would not allow him to go in. <sup>2</sup>And her father said, 'I really thought that you utterly hated her; so I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister fairer than she?'

for the ancient Hebrews beginning at sunset. But it is peculiar Hebrew, meaning literally 'before he came to the sun'. The word for 'sun' too (*heres*) is ancient and poetic. Thus we should probably read *ha-hadrāh* for *ha-harsāh*, translating 'before he entered the [bride-]chamber'. For 'the chamber' in the sense of 'the bride-chamber' cf. 15.1.

In the narrative Samson salvages the position by answering in another couplet, which preserves his ascendancy in the conventional contest. This, more felicitous than the other, was probably a familiar by-word in Israel, which is adapted to the Samson legend.

**19.** He requites the guile of the Philistines also with open violence, keeping his bargain at the expense of the Philistines of Ashkelon.

**the Spirit of the LORD:** in this case, as well as nerving Samson for this unusual method of paying his debt, relates to what the Deuteronomist considers his proper work of war with the Philistines.

**20.** Not unnaturally the father of the lady assumed that relations with Samson were at an end, and she was given to 'his companion' (see on verse 11).

#### *Samson and the Burning of the Philistine Corn and the Sequel 15.1-8*

This is in the context of his relations with the woman of Timnah, which seems to be used to connect a number of disconnected traditions about Samson. It is noteworthy that all the Samson traditions are connected with strange women. This, whatever the original source, may be elaborated by the Deuteronomic compiler in the interests of his separatist policy.

**1. at the time of wheat harvest:** i.e. the second harvest, about the end of May in the Shephelah, anticipating verse 5.

**with a kid:** this indicates a *ṣadiqa* marriage, as in ancient Arab practice (W. R. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 75ff.).

Pray take her instead.' <sup>3</sup> And Samson said to them, 'This time I shall be blameless in regard to the Philistines, when I do them mischief. <sup>4</sup> So Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took torches; and he turned them tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. <sup>5</sup> And when he had set fire to the torches, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the olive orchards. <sup>6</sup> Then the Philistines said, 'Who has done this?' And they said, 'Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion.' And the Philistines came up, and burned her and her father with fire. <sup>7</sup> And Samson said to them, 'If this is what you do, I swear I will be avenged upon you, and after that I will quit.' <sup>8</sup> And he smote them hip and thigh with great slaughter; and he went down and stayed in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

**3. blameless:** now he has a wrong to avenge. But perhaps, with the change of one consonant, 'I shall be avenged' should be read.

**4. three hundred foxes:** possibly jackals, which are more common in Palestine. This may be the round exaggeration of saga, but the large number may suggest a public rite as a factual basis, designed to avert rust-fungus in the corn, which is caused by the action of the sun upon the heavy dew which is a feature of the Palestinian summer, particularly in the coastal plain and areas of the Shephelah open to it and in the western Negeb. There may be a distant analogy in the rite of the festival of Ceres in Rome in April, when foxes with burning torches attached to their tails were hunted about the public Circus (Ovid, *Fasti*, iv, 679ff.).

**5. standing grain:** the plural participle used here in Hebrew is suspect; cf. the sequel, where the singular is used. Hence 'fields' may be read here.

**shocks:** Hebrew *gāḏīš* (collective singular), 'heaps', with an Aramaic cognate.

**6. her and her father:** read 'her and her father's house' with some Hebrew MSS. and in the Greek and Syriac versions (cf. the threat in 14.15).

**8. smote them hip and thigh:** actually, 'leg upon thigh', the former denoting the leg from the knee down. The expression is taken to be a wrestling term, but that is not readily intelligible and it may rather denote headlong flight, cf. 'showing a clean pair of heels' or 'head over heels'.

**in the cleft of the rock of Etam:** this is probably some unidentified locality in the western escarpment of the mountains of Judah, which abound in large caves.

### *Samson's Victory at Lehi 9-17*

A local aetiological legend.

9 Then the Philistines came up and encamped in Judah, and made a raid on Lehi. <sup>10</sup>And the men of Judah said, 'Why have you come up against us?' They said, 'We have come up to bind Samson, to do to him as he did to us.' <sup>11</sup>Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, 'Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?' And he said to them, 'As they did to me, so have I done to them.' <sup>12</sup>And they said to him, 'We have come down to bind you, that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines.' And Samson said to them, 'Swear to me that you will not fall upon me yourselves.' <sup>13</sup>They said to him, 'No; we will only bind you and give you into their hands; we will not kill you.' So they bound him with two new ropes, and brought him up from the rock.

14 When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the ropes which were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands. <sup>15</sup>And he found a fresh jawbone of an ass, and put out his hand and seized it, and with it he slew a thousand men. <sup>16</sup>And Samson said,

**9. in Judah:** see on verse 8.

**Lehi:** as well as meaning 'jawbone', Lehi is a place-name, the scene of a single-handed victory by one of David's officers Shammah over the Philistines (2 Sam. 23.11-12), which may have influenced the present tradition. We note particularly the similarity of the names Shammah and Samson.

**10ff.** The action of the men of Judah and the inactivity of the men of Dan as a tribe indicates a date after the migration of Dan. If Samson is a historical figure he must belong to some family of Danites who had not migrated, having established close relations with the neighbouring Philistines, which may be suggested by the tradition of Samson's wedding. The great number of men indicates the saga and the heroic proportions of Samson.

**14. the Spirit of the LORD:** thus his phenomenal strength is explained, but his exploit against the Philistines is also anticipated as an act of liberation.

**15. a fresh jawbone:** hence not brittle.

**16.** In the poetic couplet, perhaps from the Book of the Wars of Yahweh or the Book of Jashar:

**With the jawbone of an ass,  
heaps upon heaps [lit. 'a heap, two heaps'],**

'With the jawbone of an ass,  
 heaps upon heaps,  
 with the jawbone of an ass  
 have I slain a thousand men.'

<sup>17</sup> When he had finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone out of his hand; and that place was called Ra'math-le'hi.

<sup>18</sup> And he was very thirsty, and he called on the LORD and said, 'Thou hast granted this great deliverance by the hand of thy servant; and shall I now die of thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?' <sup>19</sup>And God split open the hollow place that is at Lehi, and there came water from it; and when he drank, his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore the name of it was called En-hakkor'e; it is at Lehi to this day. <sup>20</sup>And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

with the jawbone of an ass  
 have I slain a thousand men,

there is a word-play between 'ass' and 'heap' (both *h<sup>a</sup>môr*); cf. Exod. 8.14 (M.T. 10), where the dead frogs are piled up *h<sup>a</sup>mārim h<sup>a</sup>mārim*. For 'heaps upon heaps' (M.T. *h<sup>a</sup>môr h<sup>a</sup>môrāyīm*) we may read *hāmôr h<sup>a</sup>martīm* ('I have surely heaped them up'); cf. LXX and Vulgate 'I have destroyed them'.

<sup>17</sup>. **Ramath-lehi**: i.e. 'the Height of Lehi'.

#### *Topographical Aetiological Legend of En-hakkore 18-19*

<sup>18</sup>. **the uncircumcised**: see on 14.3.

<sup>19</sup>. **the hollow place**: lit. 'the mortar' (cf. Prov. 27.22). It is used of a local depression between the Temple hill and the West hill of ancient Jerusalem, and in modern Hebrew of the great *cirques* in the Negeb.

**En-hakkore**: lit. 'the Spring of the Caller'. This is explained as the place where Samson called to God; but 'the caller' probably denotes the partridge (1 Sam. 26.20; Jer. 17.11); cf. 'the cheerful chirrup of the rock partridge' so often remarked by C. M. Doughty, *Travels in Arabia Deserta*.

<sup>20</sup>. The Deuteronomic note on the duration of Samson's work as a judge may be suggested here by the fact that this was the end of his effective work for Israel. The customary notice of the duration of the 'rest' or peace secured by the efforts of the judge is lacking because the editor has already indicated his awareness of the inconclusive work of Samson. Noting that the Philistines oppressed Israel forty



**16** Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a harlot, and he went in to her. <sup>2</sup> The Gazites were told, 'Samson has come here,' and they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They kept quiet all night, saying, 'Let us wait till the light of the morning; then we will kill him.' <sup>3</sup> But Samson lay till midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and pulled them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that is before Hebron.

4 After this he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Deli'lah. <sup>5</sup> And the lords of the Philistines came to her and said to

years (13.1, on which see note), he thus ascribes twenty years to Samson as judge. The further note on the duration of Samson's office in 16.31 may be due to a secondary editor.

#### *Samson and the Gates of Gaza 16.1-3*

A local aetiological legend.

1. **Gaza:** see on Jos. 10.41. Samson's visit to the harlot is narrated without inhibition or stricture, an indication that the Old Testament must be understood in its own context.

2. **The Gazites were told:** M.T. 'to the Gazites saying'. Obviously 'and it was told' has been omitted by scribal error, as indicated by LXX.

3. **doors of the gate of the city:** the plural rather than the dual suggests a double or triple chambered gateway (*ANEP*, Pl. 713), the gates turning on their pivots in sockets of iron or bronze, and being shut with a bar which held them rigid and fitted into two sockets in the jambs. Gates, jambs, and bar were all carried off bodily! The hill overlooking Hebron from the west, probably at the head of the Wādī el-Afranj, which leads down to the coastal plain towards Ashkelon and Gaza, about forty miles distant, may have been called 'the Gates of Gaza', indicating a local aetiological myth.

#### *The Betrayal and Imprisonment of Samson 4-21*

Here almost certainly a solar myth has influenced the historical tradition (see Introduction, pp. 234f.).

4. **the valley of Sorek:** the Wādī eṣ-Ṣarār, which drains from just north-north-west of Jerusalem past Mōṣā and through the Shephelah, past Zorah on the north and Bethshemesh and Timnah on the south.

**Delilah:** the name has been associated with the Arabic verb 'to be languid', or 'to

her, 'Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to subdue him; and we will each give you eleven hundred pieces of silver.

<sup>6</sup>And Deli'lah said to Samson, 'Please tell me wherein your great strength lies, and how you might be bound, that one could subdue you.' <sup>7</sup>And Samson said to her, 'If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings which have not been dried, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.' <sup>8</sup>Then the lords of the Philistines brought her seven fresh bowstrings which had not been dried, and she bound him with them. <sup>9</sup>Now she had men lying in wait in an inner chamber. And she said to him, 'The Philistines are upon you, Samson!' But he snapped the bowstrings, as a string of tow snaps when it touches the fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

<sup>10</sup>And Deli'lah said to Samson, 'Behold, you have mocked me, and told me lies; please tell me how you might be bound.' <sup>11</sup>And he

be coquettish', and that is possible. But it may also be cognate with an Akkadian word for 'devotee', the lady being possibly a devotee of the fertility-goddess, Mesopotamian Ishtar, especially if, as may well be, the tradition has been influenced by the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh legend (see Introduction, p. 235).

**5. lords of the Philistines:** on these feudal lords and their fiefs, see on Jos. 13.2. **Entice:** see on 14.15.

**wherein his great strength lies:** a mistranslation after LXX and Vulgate; better 'wherein his strength is great'.

**eleven hundred pieces of silver:** probably shekels. This odd number, a thousand and a hundred, and its agreement with the sum stolen by Micah (17.2), may indicate an editorial adjustment. The sum according to the computation of A. R. S. Kennedy (*HDB* III, 420a) would be about £150, but with variations in the value of the shekel in time and place this is quite uncertain.

**7. seven fresh bowstrings:** so LXX, correctly translating the Hebrew; cf. *AV* 'green withs' after Josephus, who specifies 'of vine'. 'Fresh' indicates full of natural sap (cf. Dt. 34.7). The number seven encourages Delilah's belief in the magical source of Samson's strength. The strength and suppleness of the fresh sinews, which made tight knotting possible and by their elasticity frustrated strain, made the communication more probable.

**9. a string of tow:** lit. 'a twisting of tow' (*p'îl han-n'ōret*) (cf. the figure in 15.14).

**11. new ropes:** cf. 15.13. Here again there is natural verisimilitude as well as a suggestion of magic in the use of new objects unimpaired by any common use;

said to her, 'If they bind me with new ropes that have not been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man.'<sup>12</sup> So Deli'lah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, 'The Philistines are upon you, Samson!' And the men lying in wait were in an inner chamber. But he snapped the ropes off his arms like a thread.

13 And Deli'lah said to Samson, 'Until now you have mocked me, and told me lies; tell me how you might be bound.' And he said to her, 'If you weave the seven locks of my head with the web and make it tight with the pin, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man.'<sup>14</sup> So while he slept, Deli'lah took the seven locks of his head and wove them into the web. And she made them tight with the pin, and said to him, 'The Philistines are upon you, Samson!' But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled away the pin, the loom, and the web.

cf. the new dish in Elisha's restoration of the spring at Jericho (2 Kg. 2.20); the new cart on which the Ark was transported (1 Sam. 6.7; 2 Sam. 6.3); and possibly Ahijah's new mantle in his rite of prophetic symbolism (1 Kg. 11.29).

13. Certain mss. of LXX indicate that Samson's instructions in the Hebrew text are incomplete and that the verse should read **If you weave the seven locks of my head with the web and make it tight with the pin, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man** (so RSV). A horizontal loom is visualized as in Egyptian sculpture (A. R. S. Kennedy, 'Weaving', *EB*, col. 5279) and the simple apparatus of the Bedouin and peasants of Palestine (cf. Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*, V, 1964, pp. 100ff.).

**the seven locks** may be either curls or plaits. The limited number of locks, if not suggested by the seven fresh sinews or new ropes in the saga-complex, may suggest affinity with the Gilgamesh epic, as Burney argues (op. cit., p. 404), citing the representation of Gilgamesh on seals with six curling locks (op. cit., Pl. III, fig. 3). Whatever the origin of the motif, this feature serves to connect the fall of Samson with the abuse of his status as a Nazirite (verse 17), though there is no explicit censure of Samson in the narrative.

14. **So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his head and wove them into the web:** so RSV, after LXX, for the obviously incomplete M.T., **and she made them tight with the pin,** with which RSV continues. 'Made them tight' means beat up firmly into the web.

**pulled away the pin, the loom, and the web:** the pointing of 'the pin' in M.T. indicates doubt as to the reading of the text, and if, as the preceding verse indicates,

15 And she said to him, 'How can you say, "I love you," when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and you have not told me wherein your great strength lies.' <sup>16</sup>And when she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death. <sup>17</sup>And he told her all his mind, and said to her, 'A razor has never come upon my head; for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I be shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.'

18 When Deli'lah saw that he had told her all his mind, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, 'Come up this once, for he has told me all his mind.' Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and brought the money in their hands. <sup>19</sup> She made him sleep upon her knees; and she called a man, and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. <sup>20</sup>And she said, 'The Philistines are upon you, Samson!' he awoke from his sleep, and said, 'I will go out as at other times, and shake myself free.' And he did not know that the LORD had left

'the pin' was not for fixing anything, but was for beating the weaving up close, it may be that 'the pin' should be omitted here. Alternatively it ought to be pointed as an absolute and not as a construct (so *RV*, following *M.T.*), as the definite article shows, and the conjunction 'and' should be read before *hā-'ereḡ* ('the loom').

**15. your heart is not with me:** i.e. you are not sincere.

**16. his soul was vexed:** better perhaps 'his temper was short'. The Hebrew *nepeš* does not mean 'soul' in the metaphysical sense, Hebrew knowing no such dichotomy of soul and body as Greek and Western thought. Meaning primarily 'life', *nepeš* means also 'impulse', as in Prov. 19.2: 'Impulse without knowledge is not good.'

**17. If I be shaved, then my strength will leave me:** here he refers to his status as a Nazirite. It is noteworthy that in the revelation to his mother that he should be a Nazirite (13.7) there is no mention of his physical strength. This is an accretion to the tradition of Samson as a Nazirite and may indicate homiletic expansion.

**20. and shake myself free:** Delilah had perhaps bound him in addition as a precaution against the surprise of the Philistines.

**the LORD had left him:** i.e. the spirit of the Lord as an extension of the divine personality.

him. <sup>21</sup>And the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with bronze fetters; and he ground at the mill in the prison. <sup>22</sup>But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

<sup>23</sup>Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice; for they said, 'Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hand.' <sup>24</sup>And when the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said, 'Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the ravager of our country, who has slain many of us.' <sup>25</sup>And when their hearts were merry, they said, 'Call

**21. gouged out his eyes:** cf. the blinding of King Zedekiah (2 Kg. 25.7). The resulting darkness may be a feature of solar mythology in the Samson legend.

**ground at the mill:** this was the work of maid-servants (Exod. 11.5), slaves, prisoners, and asses.

#### *The Death of Samson 22-30*

**22.** The regrowth of Samson's hair may be a literary convention to introduce the next episode. Here we are in the realm of magic and folk-lore, perhaps even of mythology with the recurring cycle of the sun.

**23. a great sacrifice (zeḇaḥ)** implies also a feast, as in the Rās Shamra texts and Zeph. 1.7.

**Dagon their god:** Dagon, connected with the noun for 'corn' in Hebrew and Ugaritic, is well known as a Semitic deity in Mesopotamia in the Amorite period (early second millennium) and at Rās Shamra (14th to 13th centuries), and in Palestine in theophoric names and in the place-name Beth-Dagon (Jos. 15.41), near Jaffa. He was thus a local Semitic deity whose cult was adopted by the Philistines (1 Sam. 5.2ff.) in their settlement of the corn-growing coastal plain, just as the Assyrian colonists in Samaria adopted the cult of Yahweh (2 Kg. 17.26ff.). There is no real foundation for the view of Rabbinic commentators that Dagon was a fish-god, which is based on a false etymology (*dāḡ*=fish), reflected in a corrupt text at 1 Sam. 5.4. The couplet suggests at first sight that the sacred feast was to commemorate the victory. But that must have been after a considerable interval, when Samson's hair had grown and his strength had returned, according to the narrator. It seems rather to anticipate the appearance of Samson as the butt of their jests.

**24.** The exclamation of the Philistines could be resolved into two couplets. The recurring rhyme of the first plural pronominal suffix seems hardly to be fortuitous.

**25. their hearts were merry:** lit. 'their hearts were good'. This is a regular description of animal satisfaction, contentment, and confidence.



Samson, that he may make sport for us.' So they called Samson out of the prison, and he made sport before them. They made him stand between the pillars; <sup>26</sup> and Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, 'Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them.' <sup>27</sup> Now the house was full of men and women; all the lords of the Philistines were there, and on the roof there were about three thousand men and women, who looked on while Samson made sport.

28 Then Samson called to the LORD and said, 'O LORD God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be avenged upon the Philistines for one of my two eyes.' <sup>29</sup> And Samson grasped the two middle pillars upon which the house rested, and he leaned his weight upon them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other. <sup>30</sup> And Samson said 'Let me die with the Philistines.' Then he bowed with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people that were in it. So the dead whom he slew at his death were more than those whom he had slain during his life. <sup>31</sup> Then his brothers and all his

**that he may make sport for us:** lit. 'that he may make us laugh', either in his downfall or by amusing them with feats of strength or wit in reply to their taunts.

**26. the pillars on which the house rests** probably visualizes a large hall, Athenian megaron, with three sides and an open central courtyard (see on verse 29). While spectators are visualized on the flat roof, it is unlikely that these numbered **about three thousand men and women**, which is the hyperbole of saga (cf. LXX 'seven hundred').

**28. that I may be avenged . . . for one of my two eyes:** a better reading is suggested by LXX, Syro-Hexaplar and Vulgate 'a single vengeance for my two eyes' (*n'qāmāh 'aḥat*), for M.T. 'vengeance for one of my two eyes' (*n'qam 'aḥat*).

**29. the two middle pillars upon which the house rested:** it is difficult to visualize precisely the architectural implications, but probably such effective pillars would be those supporting the two angles in a three-sided colonnaded building; but in a building of any appreciable dimensions it would be impossible for Samson to reach both. Perhaps this is another case of the hyperbole of saga.

**30. Let me die:** lit. 'let my life perish'. On 'life' (*nepeš*), see on verse 16, but *nepeš* with the pronominal suffix often means 'self'.

**31.** The notice of Samson's burial-place may either be suggested by the stereotyped obituary of Jephthah and the 'minor judges', which the Samson narrative

family came down and took him and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Esh'ta-ol in the tomb of Mano'ah his father. He had judged Israel twenty years.

**17** There was a man of the hill country of E'phraim, whose name was Micah. <sup>2</sup>And he said to his mother, 'The eleven hundred

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immediately follows, or it may originate from the tradition of the reputed tomb of the hero in the valley below Zorah (see on 13.2, 25), which was venerated like an Arab *wēli*, the tomb of one who has possessed the divine favour and who is venerated as an intercessory saint. The 'high places' against which the Hebrew reformers inveighed so vehemently may have been associated with such tombs (so Albright, 'The High Place in Ancient Palestine', *VT Supplement*, IV, Congress Vol. 1957, pp. 242-58).

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A 17-18

#### THE ORIGIN OF THE PRE-MONARCHIC SHRINE OF DAN

A literary source, compiled by the priesthood of the royal shrine of Dan, possibly at Bethel after 734 B.C., from their own traditions and those of the Levitical oracle-priests of the tribal sanctuary at Dan, and later incorporated in the Deuteronomistic history, with a chronological note on the contemporaneity of this local cult at Dan with that at the central shrine at Shiloh. For variations, sources, compilation, and redaction, see Introduction, pp. 237-239.

*The Origin of Micah's Cult-Symbols in stolen Silver, on the Thief of which a Curse had been invoked 17.1-6*

The tradition exposes the tribal cult of Dan to the gentle humour of the priesthood of the royal shrine of Dan, which the Deuteronomistic redactor transmits.

**1. the hill country of Ephraim:** this is perhaps a geographical rather than a tribal designation (see on Jos. 20.7).

**Micah:** this is a shortened form of *Mikāy'hû* ('Who is like Yahweh'), suggesting that the graven and molten image in the sequel, however much it contravened the principle of Exod. 34.17 (cf. Exod. 20.4 and Dt. 27.15), was part of the furniture of the cult of Yahweh along with the ephod and teraphim used in divination, which was probably the speciality of the cult and Levitical priesthood at Dan (2 Sam. 20.18, LXX), if indeed the ephod and teraphim were not all that was made of the silver. Micah's 'house of gods' gives a false impression, meaning possibly simply 'a shrine' (sc. of Yahweh).

**2.** Micah's mother had unwittingly cursed her own son, the unknown thief of

pieces of silver which were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse, and also spoke it in my ears, behold the silver is with me; I took it.' And his mother said, 'Blessed be my son by the LORD.'<sup>3</sup> And he restored the eleven hundred pieces of silver to his mother; and his mother said, 'I consecrate the silver to the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image; now therefore I will restore it to you.'<sup>4</sup> So when he restored the money to his mother, his mother took two hundred pieces of silver, and gave it

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the 'eleven hundred pieces of silver'. The sum, identical to that paid by each of the lords of the Philistines for Samson's betrayal, is obviously editorial, the one passage influencing the other, but which is the original cannot be certainly determined.

The curse, enlisting the divine and supernatural on the principle of imitative magic in words (e.g. Balaam's oracles), was the effective means of dealing with crime when the agent was not known or where there were no witnesses (Num. 5.19).

2-4. M.T. rendered by RSV tells how Micah was scared into a confession of the stolen silver by his mother's curse. The curse on her son, which would also involve herself, is counteracted by an immediate blessing. The money, however, on which the curse has been pronounced is unsafe for common use, so Micah's mother dedicates it, expending 200 pieces on one or more cult-objects and leaving the balance with her son for the maintenance of the cult. In verse 2 we should normally expect direct speech after **and also said** (cf. RSV 'and spoke it') **in my ears**. Hence it is proposed (Moore) that the text is upset and the restoration suggested, after 'said in my ears', "I verily consecrate the silver to the Lord for my son, to make a graven and a molten image", **Behold the silver is with me, I took it.** This would be a natural place for 'and now I give it back to you', if *lāḳ* at the end of verse 3 is feminine. The text would then continue, 'And his mother said, "Blessed be my son of the Lord." And he restored the eleven hundred pieces of silver to his mother, who took two hundred pieces of silver and gave them to the founder. . . .' The lack of direct speech after 'said', however, is not an insuperable difficulty, nor is **I will restore it to you** out of place, if *lāḳ* is masculine (pausal form). According to the order of M.T. and RSV, which we accept, the consecration of the stolen and restored silver was a convention to keep it in the family. According to the rearrangement of the text suggested by Moore, the announcement of the dedication of the silver, where the perfect can be pluperfect or declaratory perfect with present sense, adds the crime of sacrilege to the sanction of the curse. Both views are feasible, but, since no version questions the order of M.T., we should follow it.

The text may be complicated by the use of two variant sources, as seems to be

to the silversmith, who made it into a graven image and a molten image; and it was in the house of Micah. <sup>5</sup>And the man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and ter'aphim, and installed one of his

indicated further by the tradition that the image apparently consisted of *one* cult-object ('and it was in the house of Micah'), but is described both as 'graven' and 'molten'. This, however, if not an editorial expansion reflecting the formal language of the Twelve Adjurations (Dt. 27.15), where the two are associated, might refer to a hewn wooden image (*pesel*) with molten metal overlay (*massēkâh*). In 18.17, however, two images are visualized, indicating editorial elaboration if not the fusion of two sources.

**4. two hundred:** this smaller sum as distinct from the whole which had been dedicated might imply a variant source. The balance, however, was made a family perquisite by the consecration of Micah as custodian of the cult, of which the sum provided the maintenance.

**5. a shrine:** lit. 'a house of god'. It is stated that this housed the ephod and the teraphim, which were according to this verse made by Micah over and above the 'graven and the molten image'. Perhaps the making of the ephod and teraphim was the original tradition, that of the graven and molten image being secondary. Alternatively the tradition of the ephod and teraphim may be an apologetic modification of the tradition of the graven and molten image on the part of the tribal priesthood of the oracle-shrine at Dan. On the ephod, the covering of a cult-symbol with pockets for the sacred lots used in divination, and conceivably of sheet-metal, see on 8.27. The teraphim are associated with the ephod and a standing stone of a sanctuary in Hos. 3.4. The association with the ephod suggests that the teraphim were also used in divination (cf. 1 Sam. 15.23, where 'teraphim' is parallel to divination by sorcery). The question is complicated by the significance of the word as 'household gods' (Gen. 31), perhaps represented by anthropoid masks of favoured ancestors, as 1 Sam. 19.13ff. may suggest. Secondly the word may denote a similar mask used to efface the person through whom an oracle was declared, and so to emphasize the divine authority, which may be the significance of Moses' veil in Exod. 34.29-35, especially verses 34-35, omitting 'the skin of Moses' face' with LXX. We have suggested that two clay masks from Hazor and one from Gezer had also this significance (J. Gray, 'Hazor', VT XVI, 1966, pp. 37-39).

**installed:** lit. 'filled the hand', the technical term for priestly investiture, possibly indicating the filling of the ordinand's hand with the sacred portions of the first sacrifice, which is literally done in Exod. 29.31-34 in the case of 'the ram of installation', lit. 'filling'.

Consecration to the priestly office in this period was not nearly so formal as the Priestly account in Exod. 29 suggests, nor was there an exclusive priestly caste as the consecration of Micah's son indicates (cf. David's consecration of his sons as

sons, who became his priest. <sup>6</sup> In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.

7 Now there was a young man of Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite; and he sojourned there. <sup>8</sup> And the man departed from the town of Bethlehem in Judah, to live where he could find a place; and as he journeyed, he came to the hill country of E'phraim to the house of Micah. <sup>9</sup> And Micah said to him, 'From where do you come?' And he said to him, 'I am a Levite of Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to sojourn where I may find a place.' <sup>10</sup> And Micah said to him, 'Stay with me, and be to me a

priests (2 Sam. 8.18)); but verse 13 indicates that the Levites had a recognized priestly status, perhaps particularly in the manipulation of the oracle (18.5; cf. Dt. 33.8).

**6. In those days there was no king in Israel:** probably reflecting the interest of the royal priesthood of Dan as distinct from the oracle-priests of the tribal cult at Dan descended from Micah's Levite. Perhaps this tradition crystallized after the withdrawal of the royal priests of Dan to Bethel on the destruction of Dan at the hands of Tiglath-pileser III in 734 B.C. (see Introduction, p. 239).

#### *Micah secures a Levite as Priest 7-13*

The inadequacy of the first provision Micah had made for the service of the shrine is exposed, and the origin of the priesthood of the pre-monarchic shrine of Dan in a vagabond Levite is ridiculed. Later, however, the tradition, probably that of the oracle-priests of Dan themselves, emerges that these priests were descended from Moses through Gershom (18.30).

**7. Bethlehem in Judah:** as distinct from Bethlehem in Zebulun (Jos. 19.15), still a populous town in Judah, and still called Beit Lahm.

**a Levite:** he was not necessarily of the tribe of Levi, which in any case had lost its tribal identity, but certainly of the priestly caste. He is described as 'of the family of Judah'. The Levites were not particularly associated with Bethlehem, but certainly with Hebron (Jos. 21.11; 1 Chr. 26.30-32). The name is attested as a common noun in South Arabia, where it signifies one 'attached' to the cult, which is also a feasible etymology in Hebrew.

**8. to live:** Hebrew *gūr*, i.e. as a *gēr* in a strange community where his only protection was the sanctity of his status and the convention of hospitality; cf. *jār 'allāhi*, 'a protected alien of Allah' in an Arab tribe. The recurrence of the verb *gūr* (verses 7, 8, 9) seems to anticipate the descent of this Levite and his successors in the tribal cult of Dan from Gershom (18.30), according to popular etymology.

**10. a father:** not indicating seniority here, but a term of authority and respect,



father and a priest, and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year, and a suit of apparel, and your living.' <sup>11</sup>And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man became to him like one of his sons. <sup>12</sup>And Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. <sup>13</sup>Then Micah said, 'Now I know that the LORD will prosper me, because I have a Levite as priest.'

**18** In those days there was no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking for itself an inheritance to dwell in; for until then no inheritance among the tribes of Israel had fallen to them. <sup>2</sup> So the Danites sent five able men from the whole number of their tribe, from Zorah and from Esh'ta-ol, to spy out the land and to explore it; and they said to them, 'Go and explore the

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as indicated by the fact that the Levite was young (verse 7); cf. Gen. 45.8 (Joseph); 2 Kg. 2.12 (Elijah); 2 Kg. 13.14 (Elisha).

*RSV* omits M.T. 'and the Levite went' at the end of the verse, where the Old Latin versions read 'and he constrained the Levite', reading *wayyā'ēš* for M.T. *wayyēlek*.

**12. installed:** lit. 'filled the hand' (see on verse 5).

**13. a Levite as priest:** lit. 'the Levite . . .', possibly a case of the definite article with demonstrative force (GK §126b).

### *The Danite Migration: the Oracle 18.1-6*

**1. In those days there was no king in Israel. . . .** on the analogy of 17.6 and 21.25, this statement should end an episode rather than introduce a fresh section. **no inheritance among the tribes of Israel had fallen to them:** cf. Jos. 19.40-48 which lists places settled by Dan in the northern foothills of Judah and states that their border (or territory) was lost to them. There the town-list in Jos. 19.41-46 is probably constructed artificially from the note of the second and fifth administrative districts of the kingdom of Judah in Jos. 15.33-36 and 45-46. The mention of **Zorah** and **Eshtaol** in verses 2, 8, and 11 alone in the presumed southern settlement of Dan (cf. 13.25) indicates that the settlement of Dan in that area was quite exiguous. This seems to be supported by the mention of Dan not as a tribe but a family (*mišpāhāh*) in verse 2; cf. 13.2. *RSV* reads the last word of verse 1 *naḥ<sup>a</sup>lāh* for M.T. *b<sup>e</sup>naḥ<sup>a</sup>lāh* ('as an inheritance'), taking the subject *naḥ<sup>a</sup>lāh* from the previous clause.

**2. able men:** lit. 'men of substance' (*b<sup>e</sup>nē ḥayil*) (see on 6.12).

**lodged there:** spent the night.

land.' And they came to the hill country of E'phraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there.<sup>3</sup> When they were by the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite; and they turned aside and said to him, 'Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What is your business here?'<sup>4</sup> And he said to them, 'Thus and thus has Micah dealt with me: he has hired me, and I have become his priest.'<sup>5</sup> And they said to him, 'Inquire of God, we pray you, that we may know whether the journey on which we are setting out will succeed.'<sup>6</sup> And the priest said to them, 'Go in peace. The journey on which you go is under the eye of the LORD.'

7 Then the five men departed, and came to La'ish, and saw the people who were there, how they dwelt in security, after the manner of the Sido'nians, quiet and unsuspecting, lacking nothing that is in the earth, and possessing wealth, and how they were far from the

**3. they recognized the voice:** they either recognized the dialect as of Judah near their home country, or the voice of the individual, who as from a neighbouring district may have been known to them, or they may simply have heard him at the service and recognized a priest.

**5. Inquire of God:** i.e. consult the oracle, which was the special province of the Levites (Dt. 33.8), for which the equipment was available in the ephod and the teraphim (see on 17.5).

**6. under the eye of the LORD:** lit. 'in front of Yahweh', or in English idiom, 'under his countenance'.

#### *The Danite Migration: the Reconnaissance of Laish 7-10*

**7. Laish:** cf. Leshem in Jos. 19.47, known by this name only here, and later called Dan, conventionally the northernmost settlement in Israel as Beersheba was the southernmost. It is usually identified with Tell el-Qāḍi ('the Mound of the Judge'), which suggests Dan, this name probably surviving in the Nahr Leddān, one of the sources of the Jordan. The site is about thirty miles from Tyre and forty miles from Damascus.

**after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and unsuspecting:** on Sidon, see on 10.6. By the middle of the Early Iron Age, in which these events are set, the Phoenicians had been confined to their coastal settlements by the Aramaean settlement in the interior of Syria, hence they impressed the warlike Hebrews as a peaceful people. Their occupation of the Upper Jordan region was probably connected with their interest in communication with Damascus, the metropolis of the North Arabian steppe and a great entrepôt of caravan trade with South Arabia and

Sido'nians and had no dealing with any one. <sup>8</sup>And when they came to their brethren at Zorah and Esh'ta-ol, their brethren said to them, 'What do you report?' <sup>9</sup>They said, 'Arise, and let us go up against them; for we have seen the land, and behold, it is very fertile. And will you do nothing? Do not be slow to go, and enter in and possess the land. <sup>10</sup>When you go, you will come to an unsuspecting people. The land is broad; yea, God has given it into your hands, a place where there is no lack of anything that is in the earth.'

11 And six hundred men of the tribe of Dan, armed with weapons of war, set forth from Zorah and Esh'ta-ol, <sup>12</sup>and went up and encamped at Kir'iath-je'arim in Judah. On this account that place is called Ma'haneh-dan to this day; behold, it is west of Kir'iath-je'-

Mesopotamia. They probably had a further interest in the Hauran, which was a source of grain for Palestine and the Lebanon until Turkish times.

**and had no dealings with any one:** Hebrew *w'ḏāḥār 'ēn lāhem 'im 'āḏām*; the last word is probably a scribal error for *'ārām*, 'the Aramaeans' (so Greek versions). Aramaean tribal confederacies had by this time settled in the north of Palestine. Warlike, like Israel, they might have proved valuable allies to the Phoenician settlement.

**lacking nothing that is in the earth, and possessing wealth:** cf. M.T. *w''ēn maḥlīm dāḥār bā'āreṣ yōrēš 'eṣer*, 'and there was none in the land possessing authority that might put them to shame', a translation literally just possible, but unlikely. The versions give no help, but the text may be restored with the minimum of emendation *'ēn mikkol-dāḥār bā'āreṣ rēš wā'ōṣer*, 'there was no dearth or shortage of a single thing in the land'. Here we may note the partitive preposition *min* with the singular, which as in Arabic signifies 'not a single . . .'; cf. 1 Sam. 14.45, 'there shall not fall a single hair of his'.

**8. What do you report?:** lit. 'What you?' EVV feasibly assume haplography of 'say' (*'ōm'rim*) before the first word of verse 9, 'and they said' (*wayyō'm'ru*).

*The Danite Migration: the Appropriation of Micah's Levite and Cult Equipment*  
11-27a

11-12. **Zorah and Eshtaol** are again mentioned alone (cf. verse 2) in connection with the association of Dan with the foothills of Judah, indicating the limited settlement of Dan there. The place-names **Mahaneh-dan** (lit. 'camp of Dan') between those places (cf. 13.25) and **Kiriath-jearim** (verse 12) some six miles eastwards probably relate rather to rallying-places of the scattered elements of Dan than stages in the emigration, as the present passage suggests. It is even possible that Mahaneh-dan in both localities may be a corruption of Manahathites,

arim. <sup>13</sup>And they passed on from there to the hill country of E'phraim, and came to the house of Micah.

<sup>14</sup> Then the five men who had gone to spy out the country of La'ish said to their brethren, 'Do you know that in these houses there are an ephod, ter'aphim, a graven image, and a molten image? Now therefore consider what you will do.' <sup>15</sup>And they turned aside thither, and came to the house of the young Levite, at the home of Micah, and asked him of his welfare. <sup>16</sup> Now the six hundred men of the Danites, armed with their weapons of war, stood by the entrance of the gate; <sup>17</sup> and the five men who had gone to spy out the land went up, and entered and took the graven image, the ephod, the ter'aphim, and the molten image, while the priest stood by the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men armed with weapons of war. <sup>18</sup>And when these went into Micah's house and took the graven image, the ephod, the ter'aphim, and the molten image, the

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a clan of Dan, who are located near Kiriath-jearim (1 Chr. 2.52, 54); cf. the burial-place of Manoah, whose name indicates the same clan, between Zorah and Eshtaol (16.31). See further, on 13.2.

**12. Kiriath-jearim:** by Qiryat el-'Ainab, also called Abū Ghōsh (see on Jos. 15.9).

**13. the hill country of Ephraim:** the route of the migration like the home of Micah is not further particularized, but it probably followed the Wādī eṣ-Ṣarār, as the localities in verses 11 and 12 indicate, so that 'the hill country of Ephraim' would be on the upper course of the Wādī just north-west of Jerusalem.

**14. in these houses:** this indicates an open village.

**15. asked him of his welfare:** in the Hebrew idiom this means 'greeted him'. The mass of the Danites thus diverted the attention of the Levite while the five former spies stole the cult equipment.

**16. men of the Danites, armed with their weapons of war:** so RSV, rightly, associating the adjective with the men, the phrase being misplaced in M.T. by a scribal error.

**by the entrance of the gate:** this normally suggests a gate in a walled settlement, but here it may denote a gate in the courtyard of Micah's house, which served also as the precinct of the shrine.

**17. went up:** indicates that the house was on a higher level.

On the two images here visualized, see on 17.2-4. On the ephod and teraphim, see on verse 5.

**18. What are you doing?:** the protest is remarkably feeble.

priest said to them, 'What are you doing?' <sup>19</sup>And they said to him, 'Keep quiet, put your hand upon your mouth, and come with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and family in Israel?' <sup>20</sup>And the priest's heart was glad; he took the ephod, and the ter'aphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.

<sup>21</sup> So they turned and departed, putting the little ones and the cattle and the goods in front of them. <sup>22</sup> When they were a good way from the home of Micah, the men who were in the houses near Micah's house were called out, and they overtook the Danites. <sup>23</sup> And they shouted to the Danites, who turned round and said to Micah, 'What ails you that you come with such a company?' <sup>24</sup> And he said, 'You take my gods which I made, and the priest, and go away, and what have I left? How then do you ask me, "What ails you?"' <sup>25</sup> And the Danites said to him, 'Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows fall upon you, and you lose your life with the lives of your household.' <sup>26</sup> Then the Danites went their way; and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his home.

**19. a father and a priest:** also the terms of Micah's invitation (see on 17.10).

**a tribe and a family in Israel:** the use of 'family' (better 'clan') along with tribe (*šēbet*) suggests that 'tribe' is perhaps a secondary gloss, the Danites being better described as a clan (cf. verse 11; 13.2).

**21. putting the little ones and the cattle and the goods in front of them:** they were apprehensive of pursuit and attack, which indicates that Micah might have had more supporters than the narrative suggests (cf. verses 22, 23).

**goods:** lit. 'weight'; cf. Gen. 31.1; Isa. 10.3, where the masculine form is used.

**22. were called out:** this is the regular description of the local rally in Judges. Micah had obviously been able to rally some of his tribe.

**23. that you come with such a company:** Burney's translation is better, 'that you are up in arms' (see on verse 22).

**24. my gods:** the plural is possible, but also possible is the singular in English translation.

**25. angry fellows:** lit. 'acrid of temper' (cf. Moore, *op. cit.*, *ad loc.*), not 'embittered' but rather 'resentful'. On 'temper' (*nepeš*), see on 16.16.



27 And taking what Micah had made, and the priest who belonged to him, the Danites came to La'ish, to a people quiet and unsuspecting, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and burned the city with fire.<sup>28</sup> And there was no deliverer because it was far from Sidon, and they had no dealings with any one. It was in the valley which belongs to Beth-rehob. And they rebuilt the city, and dwelt in it.<sup>29</sup> And they named the city Dan, after the name of Dan their ancestor, who was born to Israel; but the name of the city was La'ish at the first.<sup>30</sup> And the Danites set up the graven image for themselves; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Moses, and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity

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28. On the location of the city and its aloofness from Aramaean neighbours see on verse 7.

**in the valley which belongs to Beth-rehob:** Beth-rehob is mentioned in connection with the Aramaeans in 2 Sam. 10.6, 8, where it is also associated with Maacah, probably the Aramaean tribe whose name is preserved in Abel-beth-maacah (Tell Ibl el-Qamh, c. 4 miles W. of Dan), and with Zobah about Ba'albek in the Biq'a south of Ḥamā according to Assyrian inscriptions of the 7th century, and with Tob, the steppe north-east of Gilead, where Jephthah took refuge (11.3). In view of the location of Dan 'in the valley which belongs to Beth-rehob', a particular site is visualized, which may be Bāniās, as proposed by Nötscher (op. cit., p. 70).

29. **Dan their ancestor, who was born to Israel:** i.e. to the individual Jacob, a reference to the patriarchal history in the narrative of the Pentateuch (Gen. 30.5-6).

30. **the graven image:** note the singular (cf. verses 14, 17, 18, 20. See on 17.2-4). **Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Moses:** Jonathan was probably the name of the Levite, reputedly the first priest of the tribal sanctuary of Dan. He is represented as the son of Gershom the son of Moses (Exod. 2.22, 18.3), but this probably signifies that he was of the Gershomite branch of the Levites. 'Moses' is converted in the M.T. to 'Manasseh' with the addition of the letter 'n' above the other consonants. By the use of the name of the apostate king of Judah, the scribes preserve the name of Moses from the taint of images in the cult of Dan.

**until the day of the captivity of the land:** the reference is probably to the deportation by Tiglath-pileser III in 734 B.C., when all the kingdom of Israel, except Samaria and district, was reorganized as Assyrian provinces.

of the land.<sup>31</sup> So they set up Micah's graven image which he made, as long as the house of God was at Shiloh.

**19** In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of

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31. as long as the house of God was at Shiloh: if the text is to be accepted, this may simply assert the fact that the two cults were contemporary until the cessation of Shiloh as the sanctuary of the Ark (1 Sam. 4.11; cf. Jer. 7.12, 14, 26.6, 9; cf. Ps. 78.60ff.). On Shiloh, see Jos. 18.1. But Shiloh may be a scribal inversion of the consonants of *hal-layish*.

#### APPENDIX B

##### THE AFFAIR OF GIBEAH AND THE BENJAMINITE WAR 19-21

For sources and literary affinities, see Introduction, pp. 239-243.

##### *The Levite's Recovery of his Concubine 19.1-10a*

Here the references to the woman as a 'wife' (*'issāh*) and a 'concubine' (*pīlēgēs*) and to her father as 'his father-in-law, the girl's father' (verses 4, 9) have been taken to indicate duplicate traditions. This, however, does not necessarily follow, Ugaritic usage indicating that *'issāh* referred to various degrees of marriage, requiring further qualification when it denoted a fully legal wife. The status of *pīlēgēs*, on the other hand, as 8.31 and chapter 9 indicate, denotes a regular status like that of a *ṣadiqa* wife in early Arab usage. The Hebrew word *hōtēn*, rendered here 'father-in-law', may, as in Arabic usage, denote either the father-in-law or brother-in-law (cf. 1.16, 4.11), and so requires to be defined as one or the other. There does seem to be sound evidence of duplicate sources in verse 9, however, when it is twice said in different words that the day is declining and the invitation to stay overnight is given variously in the singular and the plural. Again, though the men of Gibeah demand to abuse the Levite carnally (19.22) and actually abuse his concubine until she dies (verse 25), the Levite's accusation is that they had murderous designs on him (20.5). The host's offer of his own daughter and his guest's concubine to appease the lust of the townsmen (verse 24) would be as much a breach of the convention of hospitality; cf. the accidental killing of the camel of a guest in the tribe of el-Basūs, which occasioned a forty-year tribal war. Here then, we submit is another trace of the variant tradition, unskillfully joined to the tradition of the offering by the Levite of his concubine (verse 25b). The refusal of the offer of the host's daughter (verse 25a) is from a variant tradition, which here follows Genesis 19 more closely.

The dating of the incident, 'in those days, when there was no king in Israel', if it

E'phraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. <sup>2</sup>And his concubine became angry with him, and she went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there some four months. <sup>3</sup>Then her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her and bring her back. He had with him his servant and a couple of asses. And he came to her father's house; and when the girl's father saw him, he came with joy to meet him. <sup>4</sup>And his father-in-law, the girl's father, made him stay, and he

is not redactional repetition of 18.1, may indicate the same source in the royal priesthood of North Israel, in this case of Bethel, and the reference to 'the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim' (19.1), i.e. to the north, and the location of Shiloh relative to Bethel (21.19) seem to point to Bethel as a source of at least one version of the tradition.

**1. sojourning:** see on 17.8.

**the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim:** from the Levite's return journey this was in the north. The hill country of Ephraim may denote the tribal district rather than the geographical region here (see on Jos. 20.7).

**concubine:** (Hebrew *pīlēgēš*). See introduction to this section, p. 372.

**2. became angry with him:** so *RSV*, after some MSS. of LXX and Old Latin versions. Burney (*ad loc.*) reads *wattiz'ap* for M.T. *wattizneh* ('and she played the harlot'), cf. Koehler (*Lexicon*, p. 261), who retains the M.T., taking the verb as a cognate of Akkadian *zinū* ('to be angry'). The whole transaction in the sequel, especially if the M.T. is correct, would suggest that there was a regular contract between the Levite and the woman; cf. 'many days' in what appears to be such a contract in Hos. 3.3. Koehler's interpretation, on the other hand, is supported by verse 3, which speaks of the Levite speaking kindly to, i.e. soothing, the girl.

**some four months:** lit. 'days, four months', the latter particularizing on the former, which is indefinite. Even so the phrase is peculiar, and may be a corruption of 'many days' (*yāmīm rabbīm*), 'four' being in Hebrew *'arbā'āh*.

**3. her husband:** this implies a regular contractual association, which would obtain even if the woman were *pīlēgēš*. See on verse 2 and introduction to this section.

**and bring her back:** so *RSV*, with the versions for M.T. 'to bring it back'.

**and he came:** so *RSV* with certain LXX texts for M.T. 'and she brought him in'.

**4. his father-in-law, the girl's father:** the latter defines the former, which in its Arabic cognate may be father-in-law, brother-in-law, or any male relative of the wife. On the relevance of this to source-analysis, see introduction to this section, p. 372.

remained with him three days; so they ate and drank, and lodged there. <sup>5</sup>And on the fourth day they arose early in the morning, and he prepared to go; but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, 'Strengthen your heart with a morsel of bread, and after that you may go.' <sup>6</sup> So the two men sat and ate and drank together; and the girl's father said to the man, 'Be pleased to spend the night, and let your heart be merry.' <sup>7</sup> And when the man rose up to go, his father-in-law urged him, till he lodged there again. <sup>8</sup> And on the fifth day he arose early in the morning to depart; and the girl's father said, 'Strengthen your heart, and tarry until the day declines.' So they ate, both of them. <sup>9</sup> And when the man and his concubine and his servant rose up to depart, his father-in-law, the girl's father, said to him, 'Behold, now the day has waned toward evening; pray tarry all night. Behold, the day draws to its close; lodge here and let your

**5. a morsel of bread:** note hyperbolic litotes as in Gen. 18.5-8.

**6. let your heart be merry:** lit. 'be good', the conventional description of the relaxation of a party (cf. verse 22; 16.25).

**8. tarry until the day declines:** in view of the fact that in verse 9 the declining of the day (a different phrase) is alleged as a reason for spending the night, the text has been suspected. Certain MSS. of LXX read 'and he persuaded him', and 'and he/they tarried', for 'tarry' has been conjectured. The reference may rather be in the first place to the coolness of the afternoon, which is noted by the Arabs (Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte* . . . I, 2, 1964, p. 613), who use the evening greeting after midday, and the second reference in verse 9, lit. 'the day has drooped to sunset', may be to the quick decline of the day towards the early darkness of these latitudes; cf. 'the sun has declined to setting', in the idiom of the modern Arab peasants, referring to any time after 3 p.m.

**9. tarry all night. Behold, the day draws to its close:** Hebrew *hinnēh ḥay-yôm*, the third different reference to the declining of the day. The imperative is in the masculine plural, and may indicate a variant tradition from verse 6, where the singular of the same verb is used. The following clause is a doublet of 'the day has drooped (*RSV* 'waned') towards sunset' (*RSV* 'evening') (*hinnēh nā rāpāh hay-yôm*), which may indicate a variant source, but cf. note on verse 8. The verb *ḥānāh* is not attested elsewhere in the Old Testament in this sense, but the meaning of the cognate in Arabic and Syriac, 'to bend down', suggests that this is the root meaning of the Hebrew *ḥānāh* ('to camp'). Calculating from sunset at Gibeah about 6 p.m., the party must have left Bethlehem at about 3, which is reckoned by the Arabs as evening (*ʿaṣr*) (cf. 2 Kg. 16.15).

heart be merry; and tomorrow you shall arise early in the morning for your journey, and go home.'

10 But the man would not spend the night; he rose up and departed, and arrived opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). He had with him a couple of saddled asses, and his concubine was with him.

11 When they were near Jebus, the day was far spent, and the servant said to his master, 'Come now, let us turn aside to this city of the Jebusites, and spend the night in it.' 12 And his master said to him 'We will not turn aside into the city of foreigners, who do not belong to the people of Israel; but we will pass on to Gib'e-ah.' 13 And he

**10. Jebus:** glossed as 'Jerusalem', which is attested in the Amarna Tablets c. 1400 B.C. and the Egyptian Execration Texts from Luxor c. 1850 B.C., applies particularly to Jerusalem immediately before David's occupation (2 Sam. 5.6ff.), the name being an artificial reconstruction from the inhabitants, 'the Jebusites'. The first references to these just before David's occupation may suggest that they were kindred of the Philistines, who garrisoned parts of the central highlands at this time, e.g. Gibeah and Michmash just north of Jerusalem; cf. E. A. Speiser's view that the Jebusites were Hurrian on the evidence of the Hurrian theophoric name of Abdi-Khepa, the chief of Jerusalem in the Amarna Age (*The World History of the Jewish People*, I, 1964, p. 159). Jebus is used of the city only here and in 1 Chr. 11.4, 5.

#### *The Journey to Gibeah and the Night's Lodging 10b-21*

We find no certain evidence of a duplicate tradition here. The statement that the men of the place were Benjaminites (verse 16c) seems obviously a post-exilic gloss.

**11. the day was far spent:** lit. 'had gone down', reading *yāraḏ* for *raḏ* of M.T. The phrase is unique though intelligible, the reference being to the decline of the sun.

**12. the city of foreigners:** so RSV correctly for M.T. 'a foreigner'. The explicit mention of a settlement of 'the people of Israel' in contrast to 'foreigners' designedly emphasizes the breach of hospitality by the men of Gibeah. The reference to Israelites and foreigners here reflects the 'Hivite', i.e. Hurrian, settlements in the vicinity, such as Gibeon (see on Jos. 9.3).

**Gibeah:** lit. 'a hill', is generally defined as 'Gibeah of Benjamin' (1 Sam. 13.15 etc.) or 'Gibeah of Saul' (1 Sam. 11.4, etc.) to avoid confusion with nearby Geba' (also 'a hill'). Listed as a city in Benjamin in Jos. 18.28, it is identified with modern Tell el-Fûl, c. 4 miles N. of Jerusalem, excavated by Albright in 1922 and 1933 (AASOR IV, 1924, pp. 28ff.; BASOR 52, 1933, pp. 6-12; L. A. Sinclair, AASOR XXXIV-XXXV, 1960, pp. 1-52). The location is confirmed by its situation south



said to his servant, 'Come and let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night at Gib'e-ah or at Ramah.' <sup>14</sup> So they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gib'e-ah, which belongs to Benjamin, <sup>15</sup> and they turned aside there, to go in and spend the night at Gib'e-ah. And he went in and sat down in the open square of the city; for no man took them into his house to spend the night.

<sup>16</sup> And behold, an old man was coming from his work in the field at evening; the man was from the hill country of E'phraim, and he was sojourning in Gib'e-ah; the men of the place were Benjaminites. <sup>17</sup> And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the wayfarer in the open square of the city; and the old man said, 'Where are you going? and whence do you come?' <sup>18</sup> And he said to him, 'We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote parts of the hill country of E'phraim, from which I come. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; and I am going to my home; and nobody takes me into his

of Ramah (modern er-Rām), about one and a half miles farther north, which indicates that the present great north road to Nāblus, which follows the line of a Roman road, here followed the ancient track just west of the watershed (cf. 21.19).

**14. the sun went down on them:** an important feature of foot-travel in Palestine even in Mandatory times, since scarcely an hour intervenes between sunset and darkness and closed doors.

**15. and they turned aside:** i.e. from the comparatively level road to the hill-top on which the village, like most in Palestine, was situated.

**in the open square of the city:** lit. 'the broad place'. Such settlements were huddled closely together within their walls. Streets were narrow lanes, but the space within the gate was open, and was in consequence a place of business or social life (cf. Ru. 4.1; Job 29.7; Prov. 31.23), e.g. the Damascus Gate of modern Jerusalem with its money-changers, notaries, and cafés. Here local elders gave arbitration, justice was dispensed (Dt. 22.24; Amos 5.15, etc.) and a man's reputation was sustained or marred (Prov. 31.23). Here the two angels are met and invited by Lot (Gen. 19.1, J) in the first of the many close parallels between the story of Sodom and one variant of the story of the outrage at Gibeah.

**16.** As in Genesis 19 the hospitality of the sojourner emphasizes by contrast the churlishness of the natives.

**18. I am going to my home:** so RSV, after LXX for M.T., 'the house of Yahweh', which is probably a scribal corruption, the pronominal suffix *y* being mistaken by a scribe for the abbreviation of 'Yahweh', this being suggested by the

house.<sup>19</sup> We have straw and provender for our asses, with bread and wine for me and your maidservant and the young man with your servants; there is no lack of anything.’<sup>20</sup> And the old man said ‘Peace be to you; I will care for all your wants; only, do not spend the night in the square.’<sup>21</sup> So he brought him into his house, and gave the asses provender; and they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

<sup>22</sup> As they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, base fellows, beset the house round about, beating on the door; and they said to the old man, the master of the house, ‘Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may know him.’<sup>23</sup> And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them ‘No, my brethren, do not act so wickedly; seeing that this man has

priestly status of the Levite and by the assumption that he was attached to the shrine of Shiloh, which lay farther north.

**19. straw:** Hebrew *teḡen*, Arabic *tibn*, the straw chopped small by the threshing, still used as fodder.

**provender:** Hebrew *miṣpō’*, known as fodder only here and in Gen. 24.32, 42.27, 43.24, from a verbal root attested in Aramaic and Palmyrene meaning ‘to nourish’ (G. A. Cooke, *NSI*, no. 121, p. 281, l. 7).

**the young man with your servants:** possibly better ‘the young man with your servant’ (i.e. ‘me’ of deferential address).

**20. Peace be to you:** after the conventional enquiry ‘Whither and whence?’, which established that the stranger was not an enemy, the bond of hospitality is established by the greeting.

**21. gave provender:** lit. ‘gave mixed fodder’ (Hebrew *wayyāḥol*, *Ḳṣṣē*, or *wayyibbōl*, *Ḳṣṣē*), cf. Arabic *bullā* and Hebrew *bālil* (Job 6.5, 24.6), from the root *bālāl* (‘to mix’).

### *The Outrage at Gibeah 22-28*

**22. base fellows:** Hebrew *b’nē b’līyyā’al*, lit. ‘sons of worthlessness’. The last word, a compound of a negative particle, *b’lī*, and a verbal noun, *ya’al*, is personified in intertestamental literature as Belial or, by phonetic dissimilation, Beliar (cf. 2 C. 6.15).

**beset the house round about:** cf. Gen. 19.4.

**that we may know him:** i.e. carnally (cf. Gen. 19.5). This enormous breach of the convention of hospitality was possible only because the host was a sojourner, but on that account was doubly odious.

come into my house, do not do this vile thing.<sup>24</sup> Behold, here are my virgin daughter and his concubine; let me bring them out now. Ravish them and do with them what seems good to you; but against this man do not do so vile a thing.'<sup>25</sup> But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine, and put her out to them; and they knew her, and abused her all night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her go.<sup>26</sup> And as morning appeared, the woman came and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, till it was light.

27 And her master rose up in the morning, and when he opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way, behold, there was his concubine lying at the door of the house, with her hands on the threshold.<sup>28</sup> He said to her, 'Get up, let us be going.' But there was no answer. Then he put her upon the ass; and the man rose up and went away to his home.<sup>29</sup> And when he entered his house, he took a knife, and laying hold of his concubine he divided her, limb by limb, into twelve pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory

**23. this vile thing:** Hebrew *n'ḥālāh* means rather 'wantonness', caring nothing for the restraints of reason, morality, or religion.

**24.** The host's offer of his own daughter (see introduction to this section) emphasizes his punctilio in the law of hospitality and the defence of his guest, which emphasizes by contrast the wanton xenophobia of the louts of Gibeah (cf. Gen. 19.8).

**ravish them:** Hebrew *'innāh* is the technical term for rape (Gen. 34.2; Dt. 21.14, 22.24, 29; 2 Sam. 13.12, 14, 22, 32).

**25. abused her:** Hebrew *wayyit'āl' lū ḥāh*; cf. Exod. 10.2; Num. 22.29, 'to make cruel sport of'.

**as the dawn began to break:** lit. 'as the dawn went up', the false dawn, a feature of which is faint shafts of light shooting up into the sky before the actual light, the dawn proper (verse 26).

### *The Levite's Appeal to the Tribes of Israel 29-30*

The division of the body recalls Saul's graphic summons in 1 Sam. 11.7. As this is also associated with Gibeah, the tradition may have influenced that of the Levite's concubine in this particular. The twelve portions of the body signified an appeal to the sacral confederacy, though if a portion were sent to Benjamin this would signify not an appeal but notice that the matter had been referred to the assembly.

of Israel. <sup>30</sup>And all who saw it said, 'Such a thing has never happened or been seen from the day that the people of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt until this day; consider it, take counsel, and speak.'

**20** Then all the people of Israel came out, from Dan to Beer-sheba, including the land of Gilead, and the congregation

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30. Some mss. of LXX read, 'And he charged the men whom he sent saying, Say these words to every man of Israel, Has such a thing as this happened from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day? Consider it, take counsel, speak.' The three last verbs, being in the imperative, are obviously part of the message. The verbs 'was' and 'said' in M.T. could only be frequentative, or rather repetitive of the response of those who at various times were shown the grisly remains, but the combinations of the perfects, and the conjunction *w* might be post-exilic adjustments of a corrupt text.

#### *The War with Benjamin 20.1-48*

A composite narrative based on two earlier traditions, one perhaps from the shrine at Mizpah and the other from Bethel. These have been combined by the post-exilic redactor of the Deuteronomic history, who has made certain harmonizing adjustments, glosses, and amplifications out of the preface to the Deuteronomic history in Judges (1.1-2.5).

There are many evidences of the composite nature of the narrative. First, after the notice of the assembly at Mizpah (20.1-2) it is stated that 'the Benjaminites heard that the people of Israel had gone up to Mizpah' (verse 3). The natural sequel is the muster of 'the Benjaminites' to war with 'the people of Israel' (verse 14). The sequence is broken, however, by a fresh statement of the rally of 'the men of Israel' against Gibeah 'united as one man' (verse 11). This is the outbreak of hostilities, hence the appeal to the Benjaminites and its rejection (verses 12-13) must have preceded this step, being in place before verse 11 in the tradition to which it belongs, which we regard as that deriving from Mizpah. There are two statements of the opening of hostilities at Gibeah, verse 19, which we should associate with the tradition deriving from Bethel, and verse 20, which we assign to the Mizpah tradition. The account of the second day's fighting is related in verse 22 actually *before* the lamentation of Israel and the consulting of the oracle regarding a second day's fighting (verse 23). The former is connected by the use of the term 'the men of Israel' with the Mizpah tradition, and the latter with that of Bethel, which is characterized by 'the people of Israel'. The latter continues with the account of the second day's fighting (verses 24, 25b) in similar terms and with similar result to verse 21, recording in similar terms to verse 23 the humiliation of

Israel and the appeal to the oracle at Bethel (verses 26, 27a, 28b). The Mizpah tradition merely notes the second day's fighting without result (verse 25a). Up to this point the Bethel tradition is more fully used, but from this point the account from the Mizpah tradition is much fuller (verses 29, 33a, 34b, 36b-48), partly because of the elaboration of the stratagem of the ambush and the taking of the Benjaminite base at Gibeah (verse 37) by the utilization of the tradition of the fall of Ai (Jos. 8.19-21). Here a certain indication of variant sources unskillfully edited is the statement in the tradition of Bethel in verse 36a that the Benjaminites were defeated and knew it, whereas the Mizpah tradition in verse 36b describes the retreat of 'the men of Israel' before the still confident Benjaminites. A further discrepancy is that the Bethel tradition puts the casualties on the third day at 25,100 Benjaminites (verse 35) and the Mizpah tradition at 18,000 (verse 44). The fall of another 5,000 and yet another 2,000 in the pursuit may be a redactional harmonization, giving a total of 25,000, which still does not agree with the 25,100 of the Bethel tradition. Our assignment of the tradition which refers to Israel as 'the men of Israel' to Mizpah is based on the role of the people of Jabesh-gilead in the sequel (see on chapter 21) on account of their absence from the amphictyonic assembly at Mizpah. Our assignment of the tradition of the rape of the girls of Shiloh to the tradition of Bethel seems to us confirmed by the location of Shiloh relative to Bethel (21.19a).

This ill-edited composition is further complicated by the good intentions and erudition of the post-exilic editor or of his theology, which introduces such an anachronism as the assembly of 'the congregation' (*hā-'ēḏāh*) 'as one man from Dan to Beersheba, with the land of Gilead' spontaneously responding to the summons of the Levite. This is all the more remarkable in a period where it is admitted that there was a very limited cohesion in Israel and 'every one did what was right in his own eyes'. From him also may come the recapitulation of the Levite's grievance, where, incidentally, it is stated for the first time that he himself was menaced with death (20.5). Here there are some peculiarities of language which suggest a late hand. 'The country of the inheritance of Israel' (20.6) has its only parallel in the post-exilic Isa. 58.14; *zimmāh*, in the sense of 'lewdness' (RSV 'abomination') (20.6), is peculiar to late sources, e.g. Ezekiel, the Holiness Code in Leviticus (chapters 17-26) and Job, and no earlier than Jeremiah (13.27). In this section verses 8-10 state that the assembly was for action against Gibeah, with no question of negotiation, which is the theme of verses 12-13. The latter contains at least one phrase which is Deuteronomic, 'to put away the evil' (*bi'ēr hā-rā'āh*) (verse 13), hence it is reasonable to assume that verses 12-13 are from the post-exilic redactor, verses 8-10, which are also redactional, being a note to verse 11 from the earlier, Mizpah, tradition. The hand of the post-exilic redactor is evident in verses 1-2, where to the simple statement from the Bethel tradition that 'all the people of Israel came out . . . to the Lord at Mizpah', the redactor adds 'and the congregation was assembled as one man from Dan to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead'—surely a tautological statement. Here 'the congregation' (*hā-'ēḏāh*) and the verb 'to



assembled as one man to the LORD at Mizpah. <sup>2</sup>And the chiefs of all the people, of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand men on foot

assemble' (*kāhal*), while not limited to P, are characteristic of post-exilic usage, hence this matter, together with the exaggerated numbers in verse 2, also belongs to the post-exilic redaction. Also redactional are verses 17-18, which repeat the number of Israelite warriors (400,000!) and introduce the consultation of the oracle at Bethel (or generally 'the house of God') with the response that Judah would inaugurate the attack. This passage is obviously inserted under the influence of Jg. 1.1-2 in the secondary introduction to Judges. Another post-exilic gloss is the note on Bethel as the seat of the Ark under the ministry of Phinehas (verses 27b-28a), which intervenes between 'inquired of the Lord' (verse 27a) and 'saying' (verse 28b) in the Bethelite tradition. Besides the numbers of the casualties in verses 45b-46, there are obvious efforts at harmonization in the two traditions of the Benjaminite casualties, 25,100 (verse 35, Bethel tradition) and 18,000 (verse 44, Mizpah tradition). All these numbers, which are fantastic exaggerations, have been claimed as redactional, but the harmonization in verses 45b-46 indicates two earlier traditions to be harmonized, so that here we have the exaggeration of oral tradition. On the other hand, 400,000 warriors of Israel (verses 2b, 17) is redactional, calculated on the basis of the number of Benjaminite casualties, and the total number of Benjaminite warriors in verses 15-16 is also probably redactional.

For further evidence of the two ancient sources and the post-exilic redaction, see introduction to chapter 21, pp. 389f.

### *The Assembly at Mizpah 20.1-3*

**1. came out:** probably idiomatic, for war or to the sacral assembly (see on 2.15).  
**the congregation:** Hebrew *hā-ʿēdāh*, here essentially a religious community, lit. 'those who keep tryst' (*mō'ēd*), characteristic of P, though meaning generally an assembly or gathering in a non-religious sense, e.g. a swarm of bees (see on Jos. 18.1).

**was assembled:** though used generally in earlier sources, the verb *kāhal* is used characteristically in P for the gathering of the religious assembly (*kāhāl*).

**Dan to Beersheba:** the conventional north and south limits of the settled land settled by Israel here and in Samuel and Kings.

**the land of Gilead:** this refers generally to the Israelite part of Transjordan.

**to the LORD at Mizpah:** cf. 1 Sam. 7.5ff. (a fast), 10.17ff. (election of Saul), which certainly indicates Mizpah as the central sanctuary after Shiloh. The site, distinct from Mizpah of 1 Kg. 15.22 and Jer. 41.1ff. (Tell en-Naṣbeh), is probably Nebi Samwil, which dominates Gibeon from the south and is only 3 miles W. of Gibeon.

**2. the chiefs of all the people:** Hebrew *pinnōt* (lit. 'corners'; cf. 1 Sam. 14.38;

that drew the sword.<sup>3</sup> (Now the Benjaminites heard that the people of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.) And the people of Israel said, 'Tell us, how was this wickedness brought to pass?'<sup>4</sup> And the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, 'I came to Gib'e-ah that belongs to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to spend the night.<sup>5</sup> And the men of Gib'e-ah rose against me, and beset the house round about me by night; they meant to kill me, and they ravished my concubine, and she is dead.<sup>6</sup> And I took my concubine and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel; for they have committed abomination and wantonness in Israel.<sup>7</sup> Behold, you people of Israel, all of you, give your advice and counsel here.'

8 And all the people arose as one man, saying, 'We will not any of

Isa. 19.13), recalls the Arabic *Rukn ed-Dīn* ('the Corner-stone of the Faith'), the title of the Mameluke Sultan Baibars.

**the people:** Hebrew *hā-'ām*. This is primarily a kinship unit, and eventually denoted in Israel the religious community (see on 5.2).

**four hundred thousand:** cf. forty thousand in 5.8. Making the modest allowance for a wife, two children and a parent for each fighting man in Israel, apart from Benjamin, the total would be over two million, to say nothing of even more, natives and Philistines, in the more populous plains and towns. This far exceeds computations based on archaeological data and the statistics of any given period in the history of Palestine, and is preposterous exaggeration.

#### *Recapitulation of the Outrage 4-7*

Redactional, see introduction to this section.

**5. meant to kill me:** lit. 'conceived an image . . .', i.e. formed the intention. There is no mention of this in the narrative in chapter 19.

**6. On the post-exilic affinities of the country of the inheritance of Israel and abomination (*zimmāh*),** see introduction to this section, p. 380.

#### *The Response of Israel 8-11*

From the Mizpah tradition (verse 11), with redactional expansion (verses 8-10). See introduction to this section, pp. 380f.

**8. to his tent:** i.e. home, surviving as an anachronism long after the settlement; but possibly literal here, if the incident is from the early days of the settlement (see Introduction, pp. 242f.).

us go to his tent, and none of us will return to his house. <sup>9</sup> But now this is what we will do to Gib'e-ah: we will go up against it by lot, <sup>10</sup> and we will take ten men of a hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred of a thousand, and a thousand of ten thousand, to bring provisions for the people, that when they come they may requite Gib'e-ah of Benjamin, for all the wanton crime which they have committed in Israel.' <sup>11</sup> So all the men of Israel gathered against the city, united as one man.

<sup>12</sup> And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, 'What wickedness is this that has taken place among you? <sup>13</sup> Now therefore give up the men, the base fellows in Gib'e-ah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel.' But the Benjaminites would not listen to the voice of their

**9. we will go up against it:** so *RSV* rightly after *LXX*, the verb being omitted in *M.T.* before similar consonants in 'against it'. The verb has probably a technical sense, 'to attack', *sc.* the town on its elevated mound (see on *Jos.* 22.12).

**by lot:** to determine the foraging party (verse 10). Perhaps 'a hundred of a thousand, and a thousand of ten thousand' is a redactional elaboration in view of the redactional 400,000, which raised an impossible problem of provisioning.

**10. that when they come they may requite Gibeah of Benjamin:** so *RSV* for *M.T.*, which reads Geba, an easy corruption, since both Gibeah and Geba mean 'hill' and they are neighbouring villages, though quite distinct, lying respectively west and east of the watershed of Palestine. The *M.T.* *la'asôt l'bo'am l'geba' binyāmin* is irregular, and probably corrupt. *LXX<sup>a</sup>* and the Syriac version read *lab-bā'im la'asôt l'gib'ah* ('for those who come to deal with Gibeah').

**11. united as one man:** Hebrew *k'is 'ehād h'berim*; cf. Moore, 'confederates'.

### *Abortive Negotiations 12-13*

Redactional; see introduction to this section, pp. 379f.

**12. tribe of Benjamin:** so rightly the versions for *M.T.* 'tribes'.

**13.** Though the sin of the guilty impairs the whole community, here of Benjamin, the assembly would have been content with the capital punishment of only the guilty individuals. It was only after identifying themselves with the guilty persons by their refusal to give them up that Benjamin came collectively under the ban. There is little doubt that the incident reflects a situation not uncommon in the days of the tribal amphictyony, when tribal solidarity and the honour involved in the protection of the members of the tribe conflicted with loyalty to the sacral confederacy. The incident of the Benjaminite war accordingly is perhaps more

brethren, the people of Israel. <sup>14</sup>And the Benjaminites came together out of the cities to Gib'e-ah, to go out to battle against the people of Israel. <sup>15</sup>And the Benjaminites mustered out of their cities on that day twenty-six thousand men that drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gib'e-ah, who mustered seven hundred picked men. <sup>16</sup>Among all these were seven hundred picked men who were left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair, and not miss. <sup>17</sup>And the men of Israel, apart from Benjamin, mustered four hundred thousand men that drew the sword; all these were men of war.

18 The people of Israel arose and went up to Bethel, and inquired of God, 'Which of us shall go up first to battle against the Benjaminites?' And the LORD said, 'Judah shall go up first.'

19 Then the people of Israel rose in the morning, and encamped

probably dated in the early days of the settlement and the growth of the amphictyony of Israel. An interesting analogy to the attitude of Benjamin in protecting their own tribesmen is the situation among the clans of Mecca at the time of Muhammad, where the Prophet's clan the Benī Hāshim, though not cordially supporting him, effectively protected him in his unpopular mission.

#### *Mobilization of Benjamin 14-17*

Verse 14 the Bethel tradition, verses 15-16 redactional. On literary analysis, see introduction to this section, pp. 377-381.

15. **twenty-six thousand men:** cf. certain mss. of LXX 25,000, but cf. verse 35, which gives the Benjaminites casualties as 25,100; cf. verse 46 which gives 25,000 casualties and verse 47 which gives 600 survivors.

16. **picked men who were left-handed:** lit. 'restricted in the right hand' (see on 3.15), a *corps élite* against whom the shield on the left arm was no adequate protection. This seems to have been a speciality of the archers and slingers of Gibeah, who were among David's retainers at Ziklag (1 Chr. 12.2).

#### *Israel Consults the Oracle before Attack 18*

Redactional after 1.1-2, prefaced by a statement of the numbers of the army, suggested by the muster of Benjamin in verses 15-16. See introduction to this section, pp. 379-381.

18. **Bethel:** lit. 'the House of God'. It is uncertain whether it is a common or a proper noun here, but in view of the specific note on Bethel as the central shrine in verse 28 it is probably Bethel, modern Beitin, the scene of the fast in verse 26 and of the public mourning in 2.1-5 (cf. Gen. 35).

against Gib'e-ah. <sup>20</sup>And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel drew up the battle line against them at Gib'e-ah. <sup>21</sup>The Benjaminites came out of Gib'e-ah, and felled to the ground on that day twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites. <sup>22</sup>But the people, the men of Israel, took courage, and again formed the battle line in the same place where they had formed it on the first day. <sup>23</sup>And the people of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until the evening; and they inquired of the LORD, 'Shall we again draw near to battle against our brethren the Benjaminites?' And the LORD said, 'Go up against them.'

<sup>24</sup>So the people of Israel came near against the Benjaminites the second day. <sup>25</sup>And Benjamin went against them out of Gib'e-ah the second day, and felled to the ground eighteen thousand men of the people of Israel; all these were men who drew the sword. <sup>26</sup>Then all the people of Israel, the whole army, went up and came to Bethel

*Two Defeats of the Confederacy in Two Days' Fighting; the Oracle for the Third Day's Battle 19-28*

Compiled from the traditions of Bethel and Mizpah, with a redactional gloss on Bethel (verses 27b-28a). See introduction to this section, pp. 379-381. The passage is badly edited, and verse 22 is out of place before verse 23.

**21. felled to the ground:** so RSV, after Burney and C. J. Ball, who take the verb as cognate with Akkadian *šahātu* ('to fall').

**21, 25, 26.** There is a definite schematization in the representation of two full-scale battles with such large casualties before the final battle. The Benjaminites would certainly have followed up such victories, and the fast of all Israel with holocausts and communion-offerings at such a juncture is unrealistic. On the other hand, there must have been a reference to Bethel (or 'the house of God') in the ancient sources to prompt the redactional gloss in verses 27b-28a. Perhaps the fast and sacrifices are an elaboration of the redactor in verse 26, the nucleus of the old tradition being the consulting of the oracle, probably after a fast, concerning the renewal of hostilities after a first reverse (verse 23b, from the Bethel tradition).

**26. burnt offerings and peace offerings:** the former are rendered by LXX 'holocausts', wholly offered to God; the latter were communion-offerings, effecting a reintegration of community with God, through the convention of a common meal, the blood, fat, and vital parts of the victim being the portion of God, and the rest eaten by the community. The present passage, which is relevant to the sacral assembly, probably reflects the reintegration of community and God through communion-offerings proper to that occasion (cf. Jos. 8.31; Exod. 24.5).



and wept; they sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until evening, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. <sup>27</sup>And the people of Israel inquired of the LORD (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, <sup>28</sup> and Phin'eas the son of Elea'zar, son of Aaron, ministered before it in those days), saying, 'Shall we yet again go out to battle against our brethren the Benjaminites, or shall we cease?' And the LORD said, 'Go up; for tomorrow I will give them into your hand.'

29 So Israel set men in ambush round about Gib'e-ah. <sup>30</sup>And the people of Israel went up against the Benjaminites on the third day and set themselves in array against Gib'e-ah, as at other times. <sup>31</sup>And the Benjaminites went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city; and as at other times they began to smite and kill some of the people, in the highways, one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gib'e-ah, and in the open country, about thirty men of Israel. <sup>32</sup>And the Benjaminites said, 'They are routed before us, as at

**27. the ark of the covenant of God:** a Deuteronomic phrase, expressing the Deuteronomic theology of the Ark not as the throne of God, but as the receptacle of his covenant tablets.

**28. Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron:** cf. Exod. 6.25; Num. 25.7, 11, both P; Jos. 22.13, a post-exilic redactional insertion. This suggests a date early in the settlement of Canaan, which, in spite of the late origin of the passage, may still be correct. Bethel may have been the central shrine in the occupation of the hill country by the still undivided Joseph group (1.22-26), which tradition associates with Benjamin. The affinity of Eleazar with Joseph is indicated by his burial-place in the hill country of Ephraim (Jos. 24.33).

### *The Third Day's Fighting 29-48*

The ambush and final defeat of Benjamin, a composite account based on the Bethel and Mizpah parallel traditions, with redactional harmonizations of the variant traditions of the casualties (verses 45a-46). See introduction to this section, pp. 379-81.

**31. and were drawn away from the city:** so RSV, apparently reading *wayyout'ku* for asyndetic M.T. *hont'ku*, which would be a feasible scribal corruption (so Ehrlich, Burney), rather than a gloss as the asyndeton and uncontracted *n* in the M.T. has suggested.

**in the highways:** lit. raised causeways, indicating a much-frequented road (see on 19.12). Two such roads are visualized, one to Bethel, the great north road, and

the first.' But the men of Israel said, 'Let us flee, and draw them away from the city to the highways.'<sup>33</sup> And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place, and set themselves in array at Ba'al-ta'mar; and the men of Israel who were in ambush rushed out of their place west of Geba.<sup>34</sup> And there came against Gib'e-ah ten thousand picked men out of all Israel, and the battle was hard; but the Benjaminites did not know that disaster was close upon them.<sup>35</sup> And the LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel; and the men of Israel destroyed twenty-five thousand one hundred men of Benjamin that day; all these were men who drew the sword.<sup>36</sup> So the Benjaminites saw that they were defeated.

The men of Israel gave ground to Benjamin, because they trusted to the men in ambush whom they had set against Gib'e-ah.<sup>37</sup> And the men in ambush made haste and rushed upon Gib'e-ah; the men in ambush moved out and smote all the city with the edge of the sword.<sup>38</sup> Now the appointed signal between the men of Israel and the men in ambush was that when they made a great cloud of smoke

the other probably to Gibeon (corrupted in M.T. to Gibeah) and so on to the coastal plain by the Wādī Salmān to the valley of Ajalon, one of the recognized passes from the coastal plain to the central plateau. An ambush can scarcely be visualized in the open country visible from Gibeah towards the west, and we suppose that here a diversion was created by an attack on Gibeah by a relatively small body (as is suggested by thirty casualties) and a withdrawal to where the main body was stationed as a decoy at Baal-Tamar, a place not certainly known but located by Eusebius just north-east of Tell el-Fūl (Gibeah). Meanwhile an ambush had been laid nearer Gibeah, apparently east of the watershed utilizing the wādīs in the rocky, bare country (*ma'areh*) by Geba', three miles east of Gibeah (verse 33), where RSV reads 'west of Geba' (*ma'arah geba'*).

**33. rushed out:** rather 'burst forth' (Hebrew *mēgī'ah*), the same root as in Gihon ('the Gusher'), the intermittent spring in the Kidron valley, the source of the water supply of ancient Jerusalem.

**37. rushed upon:** Hebrew *wayyipš'ū*, better 'deployed from ambush', a variant of the Bethel tradition 'burst forth' (verse 33b).

**moved out:** Hebrew *wayyimšōk*, probably also 'deployed'; cf. *mešek haz-zera'*, lit. 'prolongation of seed', i.e. seed broadcast.

**38. the appointed signal:** lit. 'the appointment', that which had been agreed upon. This and the sequel in the Mizpah tradition were probably influenced by the tradition of the fall of Ai in Jos. 8.19ff.

rise up out of the city<sup>39</sup> the men of Israel should turn in battle. Now Benjamin had begun to smite and kill about thirty men of Israel; they said, 'Surely they are smitten down before us, as in the first battle.'<sup>40</sup> But when the signal began to rise out of the city in a column of smoke, the Benjaminites looked behind them; and behold, the whole of the city went up in smoke to heaven.<sup>41</sup> Then the men of Israel turned, and the men of Benjamin were dismayed, for they saw that disaster was close upon them.<sup>42</sup> Therefore they turned their backs before the men of Israel in the direction of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them, and those who came out of the cities destroyed them in the midst of them.<sup>43</sup> Cutting down the Benjaminites, they pursued them and trod them down from Nohah as far as opposite Gib'e-ah on the east.<sup>44</sup> Eighteen thousand men of Benjamin

**39. that . . . the men of Israel should turn in battle:** reading *w'hāpāk* for M.T. *wayyah'pōk* ('and they turned'), but the text is doubtful at this point, and LXX indicates a different arrangement.

**40. looked behind them:** lit. 'turned (and looked) back'.  
**behold, the whole city went up in smoke:** better 'behold, the holocaust of the city', after Moore, *ad loc.*, who cites Dt. 13.16.

**42. and those who came out of the cities destroyed them in the midst of them:** better ' . . . out of the city . . . in the midst', reading *mēhā'ir*, with dittograph of *m* of the preformative of the following word, and *b'tāwek* for M.T. *b'tōkō* (RSV 'in the midst of them'). The Benjaminites were caught between the main force of the Israelites and the ambush, which had taken the city, from which they now advanced to cut off the Benjaminites.

**43. Cutting down:** so RSV after LXX, reading *kitt'ū* ('they beat down', or crushed'). M.T. reads *kitt'rū* ('they surrounded'), which, however, means rather 'ringed about', and, if not unintelligible, is less fitting than the emendation, which suggests crushing as between the hammer and the anvil.

**they pursued them:** better 'and they pursued them', reading *wayyird'pūm* for *hirdipūhū*. *wy* is an easy scribal corruption to *h*, and *w* and *m* resemble each other in general shape in the proto-Hebraic script.

**and trod them down:** reading *wayyidr'kūm* for the asyndetic *hidrīkūhū*.

**from Nohah:** so RSV after LXX<sup>b</sup> for M.T. *m'nūhāh* ('resting-place') with a change of vowels only. Nohah is cited as a clan, hence a settlement, of Benjamin in 1 Chr. 8.2, the location of which is unknown, though the association of Nohah with Rapha in 1 Chr. 8.2 might suggest the plateau north-west of Gibeah, where a place Irpeel is known (Jos. 18.27), c. 3 miles NW. of Gibeah.

fell, all of them men of valour.<sup>45</sup> And they turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon; five thousand men of them were cut down in the highways, and they were pursued hard to Gidom, and two thousand men of them were slain.<sup>46</sup> So all who fell that day of Benjamin were twenty-five thousand men that drew the sword, all of them men of valour.<sup>47</sup> But six hundred men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and abode at the rock of Rimmon four months.<sup>48</sup> And the men of Israel turned back against the Benjaminites, and smote them with the edge of the sword, men and beasts and all that they found. And all the towns which they found they set on fire.

**21** Now the men of Israel had sworn at Mizpah, 'No one of us shall give his daughter in marriage to Benjamin.'<sup>2</sup> And the

**45. toward the wilderness:** east of the watershed, where the land in the rain-shadow rapidly deteriorates.

**Rimmon:** modern Ramnān on a rock-spur c.  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles NE. of Gibeah over the upper part of the Wādī Suweinīṭ. On the numbers here, as in verse 46, see introduction to this section, pp. 379f.

**to Gidom:** no such locality is known, and the reading may be either Geba, with certain mss. of LXX, or perhaps Gibeon, which is nearer the M.T. in the proto-Hebraic script. The passage is redactional.

**48. men:** so certain Hebrew mss., reading *m'ṭīm* and omitting *mē'īr* of M.T. *mē'īr m'ṭīm*.

#### *The Provision of Wives for the Survivors of Benjamin 21.1-25*

Verse 17, which is almost certainly to be restored with certain mss. of LXX as 'How shall those of Benjamin who have escaped survive?' or the like (see *ad loc.*), coming after the practical solution of the problem by the provision of girls from Jabesh-gilead (verses 7, 8, 12a, b), suggests that the sequel, the provision of wives by the rape of the girls of Shiloh (verses 18-23), is a variant tradition, possibly the historicization of a local fertility ritual in the vintage festival of Shiloh. By Burney's criterion of the description of Israel as 'the men of Israel' and 'the people of Israel', verses 7-12ab with the introduction of verse 1 and the conclusion in verse 24b may be assigned to the Mizpah tradition, as is suggested by the emphasis on the oath at Mizpah concerning those who absented themselves from the assembly there, which is fundamental to the tradition of the incident at Jabesh-gilead. Verses 17-24a, on the other hand, possibly with verses 6 and 25, may be assigned to the Bethel

people came to Bethel, and sat there till evening before God, and they lifted up their voices and wept bitterly. <sup>3</sup>And they said, 'O LORD, the God of Israel, why has this come to pass in Israel, that there should be today one tribe lacking in Israel?' <sup>4</sup>And on the morrow the

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tradition, as is indicated by the location of Shiloh relatively to Bethel (verse 19), if this is not all redactional, as it certainly partly is. The various traditions have been combined by the post-exilic Deuteronomistic redactor, whose hand is probably evident in verse 9, where the statement of the absence of representatives from Jabesh-gilead is tautological after verse 8b, and in fact in the whole passage verses 9-11, with its schematized and grossly exaggerated number of 12,000 armed men against Jabesh-gilead and the conception of Israel as 'the congregation' and the description of Shiloh as 'which is the land of Canaan' (verse 12b). The twice-redundant 'And the people had compassion for Benjamin, because the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel' (verse 15), and the raising again of the question of wives for Benjamin by 'the elders of the congregation' (verse 16), also indicates redactional elaboration. Before verses 15-16 'but they did not suffice for them' is probably a redactional harmonization between the two traditions of the provision of wives for Benjamin. The citation of the adjuration that whoever did not respond to the summons to the tribal assembly should be put to death (verse 5) obviously belongs to the same literary tradition as the massacre at Jabesh-gilead, out of which the virgins were spared (verses 10-12). In those passages, otherwise to be determined as redactional, Burney's criterion of the description of Israel as 'the people' applies, and they may also be redactional. Verse 5 introduces the subject of absence from the assembly on pain of death as the prelude to the massacre at Jabesh-gilead (verses 10-11), surely the classical example of 'robbing Peter to pay Paul', which contrasts so strangely with the clemency shown to the survivors of Benjamin, which is the essential motive of the transactions in the old traditions. This also may be redactional, as indicated by the language and severely doctrinal theology, being possibly influenced by the Pentateuchal tradition of the massacre at Beth-peor of all except marriageable virgins (Num. 31.17-18, P).

#### *The Oath Prohibiting Inter-marriage with Benjamin 1*

From the Mizpah tradition, continued at verses 7-12ab.

**the men of Israel had sworn at Mizpah:** the binding force of the oath in the presence of God at the amphictyonic sanctuary could be contravened only by the observation of the letter of the oath (e.g. verse 22). The actual reason for the absence of the isolated community of Jabesh-gilead from the general assembly, which was attended by tribal representatives, is unknown. There was a peculiar tie between Jabesh-gilead and Gibeah, as indicated by two instances in the history of Saul (1 Sam. 11, 31.11-13), but whether those instances were the consequences of



people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. <sup>5</sup>And the people of Israel said, 'Which of all the tribes of Israel did not come up in the assembly to the LORD?' For they had taken a great oath concerning him who did not come up to

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the tie implied in the tradition in Judges or not is uncertain. The relationship between Benjamin and Jabesh-gilead is probably to be explained in the context of a smaller tribal confederacy of Benjamin and Transjordan tribes with Gilgal by Jericho as their central sanctuary as Möhlenbrink suggests *à propos* of Jos. 22.1-8 (ZAW, N.F. XV, 1938, pp. 248-49).

### *The Mourning at Bethel 2-5*

The mourning (verses 2-4) and the redactional introduction to the incident at Jabesh-gilead (verse 5).

**2. the people:** here characteristic of the redaction, as distinct from 'the men of Israel' (Mizpah tradition) and 'the people of Israel' (Bethel tradition). See further on 20.2.

**Bethel:** see on 20.18. After the battle this ceremony, which probably involved a fast, was practicable, and indeed natural, after the casualties on both sides, even granting the exaggeration of both sources and redaction. The intention to evade the oath would be further occasion for the ceremony. This was a ritual imposed *ad hoc* by a crisis in the life of the community, which involved the suspension of normal activities, familiar to anthropologists as 'rites of separation'. The people at the sanctuary, for instance, sat in abasement while they wept, like Job on the kitchen midden (Job 2.8).

**4. built an altar:** in this passage and the similar passage describing public lamentation at Bethel in 2.2-5, which both describe generally a similar occasion, we may suspect a certain stylization. The redactional passage on the public lamentation at Bethel in 21.2-4 has probably the local aetiological tradition of Bochim ('weepers' or 'weeping') in 2.2-5 in mind, where sacrifice is also noted. The redactor may have retained a variant tradition pertaining to an obsolete altar or cult-place near Bethel.

**5. they had taken a great oath concerning him who did not come up to the LORD:** lit. 'for the great oath had been pronounced concerning him . . .'. The definite article may visualize the most solemn adjuration involving the death penalty familiar in the Twelve Adjurations in the sacrament of the Covenant (Dt. 27.15-26) and apodictic laws in the Book of the Covenant (e.g. Exod. 21.12, 15, 16, 17, 22.19-20), which use the formula 'he shall surely be put to death'. These adjurations were similarly pronounced at an assembly of the sacral confederacy. More closely analogous, though not related to the assembly, was Saul's curse in 1 Sam. 14.24ff. The Bethel tradition of the Shiloh affair assumes such an adjuration

the LORD to Mizpah, saying, 'He shall be put to death.' <sup>6</sup> And the people of Israel had compassion for Benjamin their brother, and said, 'One tribe is cut off from Israel this day.' <sup>7</sup> What shall we do for wives for those who are left, since we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them any of our daughters for wives?

<sup>8</sup> And they said, 'What one is there of the tribes of Israel that did not come up to the LORD to Mizpah?' And behold, no one had come to the camp from Ja'bes-gil'ead to the assembly. <sup>9</sup> For when the people were mustered, behold, not one of the inhabitants of Ja'bes-gil'ead was there. <sup>10</sup> So the congregation sent thither twelve thousand of their bravest men, and commanded them, 'Go and smite the inhabitants of Ja'bes-gil'ead with the edge of the sword; also the women and the little ones. <sup>11</sup> This is what you shall do; every male

(verse 18), which in form conforms to the terseness of the prohibitions in Dt. 27.15-26.

### *The Affair of Jabesh-gilead 6-14a*

From the Mizpah tradition, introduced by verse 6 from the Bethel tradition, but with redactional additions, verses 9-11, 12b.

**6. had compassion:** the reflexive of the same verb as is used in the intensive-causative in Isa. 40.1, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people!' **is cut off:** lit. 'is lopped off', as a branch from the parent tree.

**7. for those who are left:** lit. 'for them, for those that remain', the latter phrase being a redactional gloss.

**8. Jabesh-gilead:** Jabesh-gilead was a night's march from Bethshean (1 Sam. 31.11-13), which agrees with Eusebius' location in Transjordan six Roman miles from Pella in the hills on the way to Gerasa, where the name apparently survives in the Wādī Yābis, though the site cannot be precisely determined. On the association of the place with Gibeah, see introduction to this section, pp. 390f.

**the assembly:** here the Hebrew is *kāhāl*, as referring to the sacral community, characteristic of P, though used earlier in a general sense, e.g. Gen. 35.11 (a number of peoples in general); Ezek. 38.15 (the nations associated with Gog and Magog).

**9. mustered:** lit. 'reviewed', from the root *pākaḏ* used also of a review before and after battle and in the spiritual sense, when God notices merit and delinquency, and 'visits' his people accordingly. Such a review at the sacral assembly is visualized in 5.14-18, according to the view of A. Weiser, which we accept.

**11. utterly destroy:** lit. 'put them to the ban' (*hērem*) in consequence of 'the great curse' of verse 5. The language suggests that the verse is a redactional

and every woman that has lain with a male you shall utterly destroy.'  
 12 And they found among the inhabitants of Ja'besh-gil'ead four hundred young virgins who had not known man by lying with him; and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

13 Then the whole congregation sent word to the Benjaminites who were at the rock of Rimmon, and proclaimed peace to them.  
 14 And Benjamin returned at that time; and they gave them the women whom they had saved alive of the women of Ja'besh-gil'ead; but they did not suffice for them. 15 And the people had compassion on Benjamin because the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel.

theologoumenon as suggested by the inclusion of women and children; see introduction to chapter 21, p. 390.

**that has lain with a male:** lit. 'that has known coitus with a male'. At the end of the verse we should probably read with LXX<sup>B</sup> and Vulgate 'but the virgins shall ye save alive. And they did so.'

**12. at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan:** a redactional gloss (see introduction to chapter 21). On the defining clause, see on Jos. 21.2, 22.11 (both part of the post-exilic redaction), where it denotes Palestine west of Jordan, the Promised Land proper, where the Ark came to rest when the occupation was considered complete. The redactor has evidently in mind the setting of the next phase of the Deuteronomistic history at Shiloh (1 Sam. 1-4). On Shiloh, see further on Jos. 18.1.

*The Problem of Insufficient Wives for the Benjaminites after the Affair of Jabesh-gilead*  
 14b-16

A redactional harmonization of the traditions of the intermarriage of Benjamin with the virgins of Jabesh-gilead and the rape of the girls of Shiloh (see introduction to chapter 21, p. 390).

**14. but they did not suffice for them:** better, if the M.T. is correct, 'yet so they did not find enough for them', which has the support of certain MSS. of LXX. The general tradition of LXX, however, omits the negative particle. This suggests that the original text may have read 'Thus did they find (wives) for them', which would be the end of the Mizpah tradition of the affair of Jabesh-gilead. The negative may be introduced by the redactor in preparation for the Bethel tradition of the affair at Shiloh.

15. Redactional, tautological after verse 6 (Bethel tradition).

16 Then the elders of the congregation said, 'What shall we do for wives for those who are left, since the women are destroyed out of Benjamin?' <sup>17</sup>And they said, 'There must be an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, that a tribe be not blotted out from Israel. <sup>18</sup>Yet we cannot give them wives of our daughters.' For the people of Israel had sworn, 'Cursed be he who gives a wife to Benjamin.' <sup>19</sup>So they said, 'Behold, there is the yearly feast of the LORD at

**16. the elders of the congregation:** cf. Lev. 4.15 (P).

*The Rape of the Maidens of Shiloh 17-24a*

The Bethel tradition (see introduction to chapter 21), possibly the historicization of a rite in the license of the vintage-festival of Shiloh. On this subject and on the relevance of the note on Bethel to the source of the tradition, and on the amount of redactional matter in the topographical notes, see introduction, p. 390.

**17. There must be an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin:** M.T. is so terse as to be suspect, lit. 'And they said, An inheritance of the survivors', i.e. 'What of an inheritance of the survivors?' 'Inheritance' (*y'ruššat*) is generally taken as implying land, which is not the problem in the sequel, which is concerned with the posterity of the survivors. This, however, may be the meaning of *y'ruššat* in the collective feminine singular, as a passage in the legend of King Krt in the Rās Shamra texts indicates, where the cognate *yrt* with this meaning stands in parallelism with 'family' (*šph*). Some mss. of LXX read 'How may the survivors of Benjamin survive?' (reading *'ēk tiššā'ēr p'lēṭāh l'hinyāmīn* for M.T. *y'ruššat p'lēṭāh l'hinyāmīn*).

**19. the yearly feast of the LORD:** 'the feast' (*hag*) implies pilgrimage and is used specifically of the great occasion of the peasant's year in the festal calendar of Israel at the autumnal New Year, which was a harvest festival after the vintage and anticipated the new season. It is uncertain whether or not 'the Lord' is a redactional addition like the location of Shiloh 'which is north of Bethel, on the east of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah'.

The vintage festival (see further on 9.27) and dancing of the girls in the vineyards may be a native custom before the Israelite settlement, adopted by Israel in her assimilation to the life of the settled land, and so an element in the worship of Yahweh. It is implied that the community of Shiloh was of Hebrew kindred, though the membership of the sacral confederacy is not so explicitly emphasized as in the case of Jabesh-Gilead. They may, however, have been akin to the Hebrews, like Joseph-el and Jacob-el, who are mentioned in the central highlands in the inscriptions of Thothmes III (15th century B.C.). Such a community would facilitate the assimilation of Israel to the life of the settled land with its agricultural festivals,

Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, on the east of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebo'nah.' <sup>20</sup>And they commanded the Benjaminites, saying, 'Go and lie in wait in the vineyards, <sup>21</sup> and watch; if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come out of the vineyards and seize each man his wife from the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. <sup>22</sup>And when their fathers or their brothers come to complain to us, we will say to them, "Grant them graciously to us; because we did not take for each man of them his wife in battle, neither did you give them to them, else you would now be guilty." ' <sup>23</sup>And the Benjaminites did so, and took their wives, according to their number, from the dancers whom they carried off; then they went and returned

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and from them, on the periphery of the Israelite confederacy in the early days of the settlement, wives might well be sought in the present emergency.

**the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem:** lit. 'a highway . . .' (see on 19.12-13).

**Lebonah:** modern el-Lubbān, c. 3 miles WNW, of Shiloh (Khirbet Seilūn). The grapes of Lebonah were used in the service of the Second Temple, and are still celebrated. The local directions are not part of the original tradition. Such usually indicate the post-exilic redactor, but in this case they may indicate the last stage in the transmission of the tradition of Bethel before the fall of the place in the late 7th century B.C.

**21. dances:** usually associated with primitive religion, man dancing out his religion before thinking it out (cf. 2 Sam. 6.14; Ps. 150.4). Here it may have been connected with sexual excitement in a rite of imitative magic in the fertility cult.

**22. With LXX we should emend the first plural pronominal affirmatives to the preposition and the verb to second plural, 'to you' and 'you will say to them'.**

**Grant them graciously to us:** emending one letter (feminine for masculine of the pronominal suffix). Emending the verb slightly, some mss. of LXX read 'Have compassion on them, for each man did not receive a wife in the war' (sc. of Jabesh-gilead). But the argument of the Hebrew text seems to be that the girls had not been seized in hostility, which would involve reprisals, and that by consenting after the seizure the men of Shiloh were clear of the oath.

**else you would now be guilty:** this is obviously the sense, suggesting that M.T. *kā'ēt* (*te'šāmū*) should be emended to *kī 'attāh . . .*, 'for in that case' (cf. 13.23).

**23. and rebuilt the towns:** so correctly RSV, the verb, which generally means 'to build', often meaning simply 'repair', in this case after a war of some four months (cf. 20.47).



to their inheritance, and rebuilt the towns, and dwelt in them.  
<sup>24</sup>And the people of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family, and they went out from there every man to his inheritance.

25 In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.

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25. The final note on the irregularities of the pre-monarchic period supports the hypothesis of a tradition conserved by the priesthood of the royal shrine of Bethel (see Introduction, pp. 238f.).

INTRODUCTION TO  
THE BOOK OF

RUTH

## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF RUTH

### 1. PLACE IN THE CANON

The Book of Ruth, associated neither with the Prophets nor with the Law in the context of Israel's Drama of Salvation, is reckoned by Jewish tradition to the Writings, where it is one of 'the five rolls', which were read at the Jewish festivals at least since the 12th century A.D., Ruth being appropriate to the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), which once celebrated the end of the wheat harvest.

The place of the book in the Writings, however, does not reflect a unanimous Jewish tradition, since in the LXX, which, no less than the M.T., represents a Jewish tradition, Ruth appears after Judges. This was suggested by the setting of the story 'in the days when the judges ruled', which was apparently taken at its face-value by Jewish tradition reflected in the Babylonian Talmud (*Baba Bathra* 14b) that Samuel wrote the book. The arrangement of the Book of Ruth after Judges in LXX occasioned the order in the Vulgate and subsequent Western versions. Its place in the M.T. in the Writings certainly indicates its late acceptance as canonical Scripture, probably no more than two centuries before Christ, but that does not necessarily mean late composition.

### 2. DATE

The early composition of Ruth was not only maintained in Jewish tradition reflected in the Talmud. A number of modern scholars also have contended for a comparatively early date (Keil, W. Wright and, more recently, Gerleman, Fichtner and Lamparter) or some time during the Monarchy (Oettli, S. R. Driver), but among modern critics until recently the consensus favoured a date in or after the Exile. There is more recently a tendency to date the book in the Monarchy, in Solomon's age before relationships with Moab deteriorated and while as yet no stigma attached to the Moabite strain in David's ancestry (so Gerleman) in the age still affected by the humanistic view of the working of Providence through human agencies, actions, and motives (Lamparter); or late in the Monarchy, perhaps as late as the time of Jeremiah (Gunkel, Gressmann, Rudolph, Haller, Hertzberg). There seems, however, an accumulation of evi-

dence for the comparatively late composition of Ruth (Eissfeldt, Weiser, Rost-Sellin). The opening words indicate familiarity with Judges in the Deuteronomic history, where a regular period of office is ascribed to the various charismatic leaders in Israel, whose significance was for the most part quite local. The reference in Ruth, of course, might still refer to the pre-Deuteronomic compilation of the exploits of the great charismatics, perhaps combined with a list of some of the regular judges or arbiters, which we have already detected in Judges (see above pp. 207-10), or it may simply be a chronological reference to before the Monarchy. The explanation of the custom in the transaction of redemption (4.7) clearly refers back to former times, to a custom long obsolete. Now Dt. 25.5-10 refers to such a custom in connection with the renunciation by a brother-in-law of the right and duty of levirate marriage (Gressmann, *SAT*, 2nd ed., 1922, p. 274, with comparative material from India, Egypt, and among the Arabs), so that it is generally argued that Ruth must post-date the legal part of Deuteronomy by a considerable time. Further, it must be noted that there are significant differences in the transaction in Deuteronomy and Ruth. In the former only a brother-in-law is involved, and in addition to the ceremony of the sandal the rejected widow publicly spits in the kinsman's face. In Ruth the latter element is omitted. This difference, however, does not necessarily imply a lapse of time between Deuteronomy and Ruth. It may be, as Rowley contends (*HTR* XL, 1947, p. 86), because the kinsman in Ruth was more remote than a brother-in-law, and that proportionately less stigma attached to him, though it might be argued that just because there was no brother of the dead husband the case for redemption was the more urgent and the stigma of the kinsman's refusal the greater. Actually Gressmann (op. cit., p. 268) seems justified in supposing that the wider application of the custom of levirate marriage in Ruth reflects an earlier usage than in Deuteronomy which visualizes marriage only by a brother-in-law (so also L. M. Epstein, Rowley, and Rudolph). This passage in Ruth therefore may be one of the many instances of historical verisimilitude in the story, which is set in the time of the judges. But the fact remains that it is presented as an ancient custom which, requiring explanation, is evidently obsolete.

The Aramaic forms in the book suggest a late date, but it might still be argued that in the presentation of rural scenes from the time of the judges these were conscious archaisms on the part of one whose classical Hebrew was otherwise fluent.

The spirit of tolerance and universalism finds its closest parallel in the Book of Jonah, with which it may be contemporary, as Eissfeldt maintains (*Einleitung*, 2nd ed., p. 595), and this has suggested the view that the book is a protest against the rigorist policy of Nehemiah and Ezra in the matter of mixed marriages (Rost-Sellin, and Weiser). It is contended, on the other hand, that this issue had not yet been raised in Israel (Hertzberg). Quite apart from the purpose of the book as a protest against the racial policy of Nehemiah and Ezra, which we do not admit, the liberal tone is related to the practical issues of the times, and we find that it has more relevance to the exilic or post-exilic period than to any other. The book consciously adapts several traditions in the J source of the Pentateuch in Genesis, particularly the stories of Rebekah, Tamar, and Joseph, and Eissfeldt has, in our opinion, adduced a cogent argument for the late date in the refinement of the motifs of Gen. 19.30ff. (Lot and his daughters) and 38 (Judah and Tamar). A comparison of the characterization in Ruth with that in Judges leads to the same conclusion. In the latter, outstanding characteristics in the figures are portrayed, often inconsistent with other traits in their character, the figures being strictly subordinated to the theological plan of the history in which they were involved; in the former, Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi are in themselves character-studies. In them the outstanding virtues are increasingly refined, and if Orpah and the defaulting kinsman fall far short of Ruth and Boaz, they serve as foils to the principal characters. The high degree of literary elaboration and the interest in individual character suggest the late composition of Ruth, though these are also features of the story of the Davidic succession (10th cent.).

### 3. PURPOSE

The date of the book is bound up with the question of its purpose. Its relation to the nationalist policy of Nehemiah and Ezra has been recently reasserted by Weiser (*Introduction*, 1961, p. 304). The loyalty



of the Moabite girl who became the ancestress of King David would have been an effective reply to this policy. But, quite apart from the major question of the genuineness of the Davidic genealogy, if the book had been a political tract, it would surely have been more unequivocally controversial, as the Book of Jonah was, and surely the point at which Ruth's Moabite origin would have been emphasized is where her marriage to the kinsman is mooted (Gunkel, *RGG*, V, 1913, cols. 107-9). If the book is indeed related to this situation, it might be more plausibly contended that the conduct of Ruth, who, as Rowley emphasizes (*The Growth of the Old Testament*, 1950, p. 151), was a proselyte, was extolled as a model and an encouragement to foreign women whom Jews had married. Or it may have had as its practical purpose to emphasize the laws of levirate marriage and redemption of a kinsman's property. This might be more relevant to a date shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., when elements who had taken refuge beyond Jordan (Jer. 40.11) were returning after a comparatively short absence.

At the other extreme is the view of Gunkel (op. cit., col. 107) and Gressmann (op. cit., p. 284) that it is simply a short story praising the loyalty and worth of Ruth. This, however, is to confuse purpose with form, which is undoubtedly that of the short story or novel, like the Joseph story in Genesis.

Rudolph rightly emphasizes the significance of 2.12, 'The Lord recompense you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge'. This might be taken as encouragement to proselytes, but in view of the affinity in general motif between the story of Ruth and the stories of Rebekah and Joseph the passage strikes the keynote of the whole Book of Ruth as a short story like that of Joseph in Jewish and Moslem tradition or like the Book of Tobit (Fichtner, *RGG*, 3rd ed., V, 1961, col. 1254) to emphasize the power of Providence (so too Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 259, and Vincent, *BJ*, p. 275). But while Rudolph does well to note the affinity in form and motif between the book and the stories of Rebekah and Joseph, a book in the Old Testament is generally addressed to a more particular situation. Here we turn again to the practical problems facing the small community of the Jews in 'the day of small things' in or

after the Exile. The general theme is that of reconstruction, where great faith in God was required of those returning from the Exile and great charity and loyalty to the good old social standards on the part of substantial peasants like Boaz, many of whom, less worthy than he, congratulated themselves, 'Abraham was only one man, yet he got possession of the land; but we are many; the land is surely given us to possess' (Ezek. 33.24). Addressed primarily, we believe, to this situation in the exilic or post-exilic period, the book by its selection of a woman as its central figure seems also to reflect sensitivity to the problem of the admission of alien women to the Jewish community, though this problem had not yet, we suggest, become so acute as in the time of Nehemiah and Ezra.

#### 4. COMPOSITION

Intimately related to the purpose of the book and to its date is the question of its unity and the actual significance of David in this literary complex. There is no serious question that the work is a unity until the summary genealogy in 4.17b and the more formal genealogy in 4.18-22, which is the summary of a fuller genealogy in 1 Chr. 2.4-15. The view that this is integral to the original Book of Ruth was held by Wellhausen (*Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, edited by Bleek, 4th ed., 1878, pp. 204ff.), and has recently been maintained by Gerleman (*Ruth (Biblischer Kommentar, XVIII, 1)*, 1960); so also Lamparter (*BAT 16/II*, 1962, pp. 16ff.), who finds the book relatively early and regards it as an apologetic for a presumed Moabite strain in David's ancestry. Fichtner also (*op. cit.*, col. 1253), while rejecting 4.18ff. as a redactional addition after the genealogy in Chronicles, admits the summary genealogy in verse 17b, recalling that at a time of stress David sent his parents for safety to the king of Moab (1 Sam. 22.3). Had David's family really had natural ties of kinship in Moab, he would have sent his parents quietly to the family and locality where they were related, and this would have been sufficient security without his special request to the king. If Ruth is to be dated in Solomon's reign, as Gerleman suggests, the emphasis on the presumed Moabite origin of David would be strange at a time when the J history was probably written, emphasizing the

hostility of Moab to Israel at the end of the desert wandering and condemning the association with Moabite women at Baal-peor (Num. 25.1b-2), though it might still be argued in support of Gerleman's thesis that the Book of Ruth, with its Davidic genealogy might have been written in face of the attitude of J to the Moabites in justification of Solomon's admission of a Moabite wife to his harem (1 Kg. 11.1). There are, however, in our opinion strong grounds for doubting this early date and purpose for the Book of Ruth. The Davidic genealogy is assumed as integral to the book also by May (*JRAS*, 1939, pp. 75ff.), who regards it as relatively early in the Monarchy, being an authentication of David as the divine king sprung from a *hieros gamos* at the high place of Bethlehem, Naomi and Ruth being sacred prostitutes representing the mother-goddess. In its present state the book would represent a historification of this theme. But that is surely a gratuitous fiction which would deceive no one in Israel. The divine sonship claimed by the Davidic line was more surely based on the specifically Israelite ideas of covenant, contract, and adoption, and the view of divine kingship propounded by May was quite impossible in Israel, which was already familiar with the story of the Davidic Succession from the time of Solomon, which develops from the divine covenant with David. May's thesis requires more support than the nocturnal transaction at the threshing-floor, which he couples with Hosea's reference to sacred prostitution on threshing-floors (Hos. 9.1), which is to be admitted as a rite of imitative magic. At the other extreme Gunkel (op. cit., col. 107) rejected all 4.17b-22 as a later addition. Bentzen (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, II, 6th ed., 1961, p. 183) and Hertzberg (op. cit., pp. 258-59) maintain, on the other hand, that 4.18-22, which by its introduction, content, and affinity with 1 Chr. 2.4-15 seems indeed an appendix, must have been suggested by some reference to David in the original, which they find in 4.17b, without, however, claiming like Gerleman that the book was primarily concerned with the descent of David from the Moabitess Ruth, duly adopted into Judah, as Gerleman maintains. Here, however, Eissfeldt (*Einleitung*, 2nd ed., pp. 589ff.) applies form-criticism to 4.17. The birth-narratives of Genesis 25 and 38, with which the Book of Ruth has undoubted affinities, culminate in the naming of the child, which has

a direct relationship to the story. At this point, however, the extant text of 4.17 differs markedly from the prototype. Here there is no relation in 4.17 between the declaration of the women, 'A son has been born to Naomi' and the name Obed. That the declaration related to some other name is most likely, and that is what verse 17a anticipates, the name having some connection with the declaration 'A son has been born to Naomi', and so being Ben-no'am or Na'man or the like. With the giving of this name the book ended. The question then arises as to the priority of the reference to Obed and the short genealogy in 4.17b or the fuller genealogy in verses 18-22. We agree with Bentzen and Hertzberg that there was something in the original Book of Ruth to prompt the genealogy of David by a later redactor. We do not agree, however, that that was the short genealogy in 4.17b.

Actually we believe that the genealogy was suggested simply by the mention of Perez, the reputed ancestor of Boaz in the blessing invoked on the marriage of Boaz and Ruth (4.12). This then prompted the addition by a later hand of the descendants of Perez in 4.18-22, the culmination in David suggesting that it was drawn from 1 Chr. 2.4-15 or from the source of that passage. In view of the setting of the story in the time of the judges, two generations were allowed before David, that of his father Jesse being taken to coincide with the life of Saul, and Obed being substituted for the name of the first son of Ruth. It is generally objected that the omission of Mahlon or Chilion, the dead husband of Ruth, and Elimelech from the genealogy contradicts the whole theme of the book on the subject of the levirate marriage, whereby the name and line of the deceased was preserved. H. H. Rowley (op. cit., pp. 184-86) proposes to overcome this difficulty by supposing that Boaz was old and without a son, so that Ruth was actually rehabilitating his house also. This is a possible solution, if impossible to control by evidence, though, with Boaz' obvious potency, it is unlikely in a society which so strongly emphasized progeny and permitted polygamy. It may be true that Ruth rehabilitated Boaz' house too (see Commentary on 4.12), but as Boaz himself emphasized (4.5) the primary purpose of the transaction, which we should expect to be reflected in the genealogy if that were original, is 'to restore the name of the dead to

his inheritance'. We must not forget that whatever factual basis there may be in the story of Ruth in family tradition at Bethlehem, which had probably contacts with the well-watered plain in Moab by the mouth of the Jordan, it is still to a large extent fiction, particularly in the names Mahlon and Chilion ('Wasting' and 'Consumption'), for which we need not look in a genealogy, though the same does not apply to Elimelech, whom also we should expect in the genealogy if that were original in the book. On the hint of Perez in the blessing in 4.12, which was probably the traditional marriage blessing at Bethlehem, the story is elaborated by the genealogy through Boaz, the historicity of which there is no good reason to doubt. But, we maintain, that is still secondary.

## 5. LITERARY FORM AND SOURCES

The literary form of the original Book of Ruth is the short story such as was developed within the narrative sources of the Pentateuch, particularly J. The story of God's Providence in the guiding of the poor and destitute suggests the Joseph story. The theme is that of the faith of a girl who leaves home and near kindred to unite her fortunes with God's people of destiny and bear a son to rehabilitate a family in God's people. In the colourful and circumstantial detail, the ethical tone and the idyll of simple family piety, the book reflects the influence of the patriarchal narratives, to which in fact there is explicit reference in 4.11-12. The analogy with Tamar (Gen. 38) is particularly important, not only in view of the broad community of motif, but in the local significance of that tradition in Bethlehem.

The source of the story is probably a popular local saga (Eissfeldt, *op. cit.*, p. 592), and indeed, we think, a family saga, perhaps a straightforward story of the return of the widow Naomi and her levirate marriage (Gressmann, *op. cit.*, p. 592), or that of her daughter-in-law Ruth, and there is no reasonable doubt that it is to be localized in Judah, as the reference to the clan of Perez indicates, and particularly at Bethlehem. The reference to Leah the mother of Judah and to Rachel, whose burial-place was traditionally associated with the vicinity of Bethlehem (Gen. 35.19), has particular point. Indeed, W. E. Staples ('The Book of Ruth', *AJS* LIII, 1937,



pp. 157ff.) is probably right in seeing a reference to the name of Rachel's son Ben-oni ('the Son of my Sorrow') in the name Ben-Naomi ('the Son of my Favour') in 4.17, though his thesis of the myth of the local fertility-cult as the source of the story of Ruth (so also Haller, but with more reserve) is tenuous and, when his evidence is examined (see next paragraph), inconsistent.

The names Mahlon and Chilion certainly suggest fiction rather than history, and Ruth and Orpah are unattested as proper names in Semitic antiquity. It is usually suggested that Ruth is an elided form of *r'ūt* ('companionship'), though the elision of the strong middle guttural is most unlikely, and that Orpah (lit. 'the back of the neck') signifies 'she who turned her back'. If the names, as is probable, are fictitious, the former might better be connected with the Hebrew root *rāwāh* ('to be saturated' or 'to be abundant in water'), and Orpah might mean 'a cloud' (cf. *rpt* in the Rās Shamra texts), such as excites hopes only to disappoint like the morning cloud in Hos. 6.4. The name Elimelech, however, if like Boaz and Naomi attested in the Old Testament only in Ruth, is quite a likely name, and is the name of one of the scribes in the longer literary texts from Rās Shamra. Staples would see a designation of Tammuz here, but *melek* ('king') was the title of any god. Boaz may be, it is suggested, a conflation of *ba'al 'az* ('Baal is strong'), which occurs probably as a cultic response in a certain passage in the Baal-myth of Rās Shamra celebrating the triumph of Baal, the god of fertility, over Mot, sterility and death, but that is still conjectural. The name might be fictitious, the name of one of the pillars at the door of Solomon's Temple being used to denote the stability of the subject in his society, but the incidence of the name in the genealogy of David indicates that it was realistic, probably a modification of Baal-'az. Naomi ('my favour') or possibly, with an Aramaic ending, a form of Na'amah (cf. Gen. 4.22; 1 Kg. 14.21), has also been claimed as connected with the title of Tammuz, but Staples's thesis of a source in the myth of the fertility-cult cannot be consistently worked out.

We must abandon the attempt to recover the source through the names of the protagonists. The one certain clue, in our opinion, is the connection with Perez. From this fact and the literary form of the story and the theme we may arrive more surely at the source.

This line of approach brings us to the patriarchal narratives of the Pentateuch, and particularly to the story of Tamar the mother of Perez (Gen. 38), itself a Bethlehemite tradition, of which the Book of Ruth is a refined version with a more particular, constructive end in view. Here we cannot over-emphasize the significance of the blessing 'may your house be as the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah' (4.12); Ruth preserves what Tamar had founded. Further echoes of the patriarchal stories of Rebekah and Rachel familiar in oral and literary tradition point clearly to the source of the Book of Ruth, and the theory of a source in cult-drama is quite gratuitous.

In our rejection of Staples's theory of the mythological source of the story of Ruth, we ought in justice to recognize that he comes very near the truth in discerning the purpose of the book to encourage Jews to return from refuge and exile. In support of this view he might have cited the recurrence of the verb ('to return') twelve times in chapter 1. In our opinion, however, the situation to which the book is addressed is after the return rather than before. Facing the problem of poverty and disillusionment after the liquidation of the state in 586 B.C., the author points the way to rehabilitation through the practice of simple piety and loyalty to the family and to the local community. Illustrative of such loyalty is the ancient custom of levirate marriage and redemption, and in the presentation of the generous Boaz the writer is obviously appealing to the better instincts of the more substantial and fortunate elements among the remnant Jews, all too many of whom were too content with their material prosperity to show much sympathy to their less fortunate compatriots returning destitute from refuge and exile.

But as the book has reached us it has acquired yet more meaning. With the addition of the genealogy of David, the final editor emphasizes that God's daily providence, which vindicates the faith of simple men and women, not only builds up the family, but relates the faithful to his higher order once symbolized by the king of the dynasty of David and yet to be consummated by the Davidic Messiah (so Hertzberg, *op. cit.*, p. 260). That the whole was so understood is indicated by the citation of Boaz, Ruth, Obed, Jesse, and Perez in the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Christian apologetic in Mt. 1 and Lk. 3.

## RUTH

**1** In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.<sup>2</sup> The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Na'omi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and

## THE SETTING; THE DESTITUION OF NAOMI I.I-6

**1. In the days when the judges ruled:** this may assume the existence of the Deuteronomic Book of Judges (see Introduction, p. 399).

**a famine:** the cause is not stated. It may have been drought, which is depicted as lasting for a long time, occasioning the family of Elimelech to live in the plains of Moab 'about ten years' (verse 4); cf. the seven years' famine in 2 Kg. 8.1. Famine might also be the result of war. The Palestinian farmer lived so near subsistence level that one or two bad harvests brought him near ruin.

**Bethlehem in Judah:** here so designated to distinguish it from Bethlehem in Zebulun. This was a place which might be influenced sooner than many places by drought since it is on the eastern side of the watershed of south Palestine, being still the metropolis of the Wilderness of Judah, where the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls were brought to market.

**to sojourn:** this denotes the status of an alien who is nevertheless protected by his hosts. Elimelech's case recalls the migration of the patriarchs to Egypt in famine.

**the country of Moab:** this is probably not, as is often thought, the rolling plains on the plateau east of the Dead Sea, but the foothills and plains north-east of the Dead Sea, which are watered by little perennial wādīs, a natural place of refuge in time of famine, especially for the marginal lands of Judah between Bethlehem and the Dead Sea. There was probably an age-long relationship between the two regions, which made it natural for people from Bethlehem to find refuge there. David, himself of Bethlehem, sent his parents for safety to Moab (1 Sam. 22.3).

**2. Elimelech . . . Naomi** (cf. verse 20) . . . **Mahlon . . . Chilion:** see Introduction, p. 406.

**Ephrathites:** Ephrathah is parallel to Bethlehem in 4.11, and was apparently the district in which Bethlehem was situated (Mic. 5.2, M.T. 1; cf. Gen. 35.16-19, 48.7), probably so named after the clan which had settled there. 'Ephrathite' denotes 'Ephraimite' in Jg. 12.5 and 1 Sam. 1.1, 17.12, on the basis of which Reuss argued

remained there. <sup>3</sup> But Elim'elech, the husband of Na'omi, died, and she was left with her two sons. <sup>4</sup> These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years; <sup>5</sup> and both Mahlon and Chil'ion died, so that the woman was bereft of her two sons and her husband.

6 Then she started with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food. <sup>7</sup> So she set out from the place where she was, with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. <sup>8</sup> But Na'omi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have

that the purpose of the Book of Ruth was to demonstrate that David was descended from both Ephraim (through Mahlon) and Judah (through Boaz), and was therefore entitled to rule the united kingdom.

**4. took Moabite wives:** the verb (*nāšā*) in this sense is a late usage. The exclusion of Moabites and Ammonites from the religious community of Israel (Dt. 23.3ff.) may indicate that intermarriage with those neighbouring peoples in circumstances such as here was not uncommon. The practice analogous to Arab *ṣadiqa* marriage, where the wife continued to live with her parents and was visited occasionally by the husband (see on Jg. 14.5-20), may have been in use here, though in the ten years' sojourn of Naomi's family in Moab the unions in this case were more permanent.

**Orpah . . . Ruth:** on the names, see Introduction, p. 406.

**5. was bereft of her two sons:** lit. 'was left from . . .', a pregnant construction, the preposition being privative. Since levirate marriage provided primarily for children, the situation of a widow too old to have children was a desperate one even in her own community; abroad it was hopeless. Even in her own country, apart from the sale of her property, only charity remained.

**6. had visited his people:** the verb means, primarily, 'to review' and so 'take note of', and secondarily, 'to make a visitation' for relief or for punishment (see on Jg. 21.9).

#### THE RETURN TO BETHLEHEM 7-22

Emphasizes the destitution of Naomi and the fidelity of Ruth.

**8. her mother's house:** an anachronism, alluding originally to the part of the tent reserved for the women (*harim*) and presided over by the mother (cf. Ca. 3.4). **deal kindly with:** better 'deal loyally with', a phrase which is originally related

dealt with the dead and with me. <sup>9</sup> The LORD grant that you may find a home, each of you in the house of her husband!' Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. <sup>10</sup> And they said to her, 'No, we will return with you to your people.' <sup>11</sup> But Na'omi said, 'Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? <sup>12</sup> Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, <sup>13</sup> would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone forth against me.' <sup>14</sup> Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

to covenant obligations (see on Jos. 2.12), where the phrase is used in its original connotation.

**9. a home:** lit. 'place of rest'. The word is much used in this sense in the settlement of the Promised Land in Jos. 21.43-22.8.

**in the house of her husband:** an economic necessity in the east. The theme of the book is thus anticipated. The blessing of Naomi was all she had to give.

#### 11-13

The destitution and hopeless prospect of Naomi is emphasized, and at the same time the question of levirate marriage, so fundamental to the book, is raised. This practice of marriage with the widow of a brother or kinsman who had died childless was not confined to Israel. 3.12 indicates that this obligation lay on other kinsmen in default of brothers, and Dt. 25.5-10, which mentions only a brother, may represent the restriction of the practice. The child born was reckoned as the son of the dead man, whose name, status, and property he maintained. But the status of wife to her original husband and his brother was posed as an academic question by the Sadducees in Mt. 22.23ff.

**13. it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone forth against me:** Naomi appears to resign herself to the fact that she has apparently lost the *b'rākāh*, or divine favour, and is a baneful influence on all associated with her according to the primitive Semitic conception of the cumulative and infectious effect of blessing and curse. Thus the author intensifies the literally hopeless situation of Naomi, and may animadvert upon the lack of faith among Jews after the collapse of the state in 586 B.C.

**14. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law:** LXX adds 'and returned to her people',



15 And she said, 'See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.'<sup>16</sup> But Ruth said, 'Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God;<sup>17</sup> where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if even death parts me from you.'<sup>18</sup> And when Na'omi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

19 So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them; and the women said, 'Is this Na'omi?'<sup>20</sup> She said to them, 'Do not call me Na'omi, call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.<sup>21</sup> I went away full, and the LORD has

her first reaction having been to go with Naomi (verse 10). The long parting is a literary convention to emphasize the destitution of Naomi and the sacrifice of Ruth, who by her return apparently forgoes the prospect of security and marriage.

15. **to her gods**, or 'god', sc. Chemosh of Moab (see on Jg. 10.6, 11.24). It is implied that the return of Orpah to her people involves the worship of the national god, who stands in a kindred relation to his people (Hebrew 'am) (see on Jg. 12.2). The same is implied in Ruth's reply 'your people shall be my people, and your god my god' (verse 16).

16. In Ruth's classical reply, where the dramatic climax is marked by poetic rhythm, Ruth sacrifices all that an ancient Semite could—home, kindred, her native religion, in short all guarantees of protection and even burial with her people, and that for a destitute and aged widow who had nothing to offer her.

17. **May the LORD so do to me and more also if . . .**: the regular oath-formula. Originally, and especially in the case of another than the person who made the adjuration, disabilities would be specified, but when one involved himself in the adjuration he may have refrained from actual enumeration of these, using instead the general 'thus'.

18. **was determined**: (Hebrew *miṭ'ammešet*), 'having rallied herself'.

19. **was stirred**: the verb (*hāman*) implies both commotion and sound, as in a swarm of bees; the natural reaction to the arrival of strangers in a village, particularly when one was a long-absent member of the community.

20. **Do not call me Naomi, call me Mara**: note the word-play on the names, respectively 'Pleasant' and 'Bitter', reflecting the common practice of expressing gratitude for, or in anticipation of, divine favour in a name.

21. **has afflicted me**: so RSV, with LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate versions, reading

brought me back empty. Why call me Na'omi, when the LORD has afflicted me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?

22 So Na'omi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

2 Now Na'omi had a kinsman of her husband's, a man of wealth, of the family of Elim'elech, whose name was Bo'az. <sup>2</sup>And Ruth

*'innāh hī* for M.T. *'ānāh hī* ('has testified', lit. 'answered, against me'). The M.T. implies that Naomi accepts the conventional conception of sin, albeit unknown, implied in suffering, which the Lord has now made explicit. The RSV simply reflects the conception of God as finally responsible for all that happens to men. **the Almighty:** (Hebrew *šadday*). Cf. El Shaddai, generally late and post-exilic (Gen. 17.1, 28.3, 35.11, 48.3, and esp. Exod. 6.3 (all P), Ezek. 10.5; and forty times in Job, where it is a conscious archaizing); it may be an ancient title of God (cf. Gen. 43.14, E). The translation 'Almighty' is prompted by the Vulgate *omnipotens* after LXX. This might suggest a connection with the Arabic root 'to be strong', which is, however, not attested in Hebrew. The fanciful Rabbinic interpretation, 'He who is sufficient' (*ša day*), was known to the early Jewish translators, but cannot be seriously considered. The most probable etymological explanation is that the word is from an old Aramaic form from a root cognate with Akkadian *šadu* ('mountain'); cf. God as 'the rock' (Dt. 32.4, 30, 31, 37; Ps. 18.31 (M.T. 32); 1 Sam. 2.2, etc.).

22. at the beginning of the barley harvest: this was associated with the desacralization rite of Unleavened Bread, in turn associated with the Passover, which it immediately followed for seven days from the 14th of the month Abib, later called Nisan (March-April) (Exod. 12.1-20, P); cf. Exod. 13.3-10 (J), which does not specify the date in Abib. The harvest would naturally vary from district to district in such a widely diversified land as Palestine. At Bethlehem it would be about the end of April or beginning of May. The writer thus prepares us for the next act, which is set in the harvest field.

#### INTRODUCING BOAZ 2.1-23

Boaz is attracted by Ruth's industry in the harvest field and her fidelity to Naomi.

This scene, generally regarded as a delightful idyll, is more truly appreciated by Hertzberg (op. cit., p. 267) as a struggle for existence.

1. a kinsman: lit. 'one who was known', a more general term used probably in view of the nearer kinsman, who was properly the *gō'el* ('redeemer').

the Moabite said to Na'omi, 'Let me go to the field, and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favour.' And she said to her, 'Go, my daughter.'<sup>3</sup> So she set forth and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Bo'az, who was of the family of Elim'elech.<sup>4</sup> And behold, Bo'az came from Bethlehem; and he said to the reapers, 'The LORD be with you!' And they answered, 'The LORD bless you.'<sup>5</sup> Then Bo'az said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, 'Whose maiden is this?'<sup>6</sup> And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, 'It is the Moabite maiden, who came back with Na'omi from the country of Moab.'<sup>7</sup> She said, "Pray, let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers." So she

a **man of wealth**: better 'a mighty man of substance', socially, materially, and morally, but originally related to military service also (see on Jg. 6.12).

**Boaz**: on the name, see Introduction, p. 406.

2. **glean**: this right was a convention of poor-relief provided for in Dt. 24.19ff.; Lev. 19.9ff., 23.22ff., and in the Talmud (Mishnah, *Peah*, 'Corner'). Till recently in some Arab villages a corner of a field was left unreaped for this purpose, though the regular alms-contribution levied in Islam must have modified this custom.

3. **the part of the field**: i.e. the strip of the cultivable land of the family, which is often allotted annually by lot among the Palestinian peasants, and, even where permanently farmed by an individual, is unfenced from other parts of the cultivable land.

4. **The LORD be with you . . . The LORD bless you**: the greeting has its modern parallel. Dalman cites the harvest greeting 'The blessing of the Lord be upon you' and the response 'We bless you in the name of the Lord' in Ps. 129.8 (*Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*, III, 2nd ed., 1964, p. 43).

5. **Whose maiden is this?**: in ancient Israel, as in modern Islam, direct interest in the member of a family is suspicious; hence Boaz inquires not directly of Ruth but of her family.

7. **and gather among the sheaves**: in view of the special concession to glean among the sheaves (verse 15) the phrase is suspect here, and in fact is omitted in the Syriac and Vulgate versions. Perhaps the phrase is the misplacement and adjustment of 'the women who gather the bundles', which may itself be a later addition to 'after the reapers'. The reapers reaped their handfuls with the sickle, which were left to be gathered into bundles and bound, usually by women (cf. verse 8). Only after these might the gleaner come.

**from early morning**: (Hebrew *mē'āz hab-bôker*); *mē'āz* occurs only once besides with a noun in Ps. 76.8, where the text is doubtful. A simple emendation would

came, and she has continued from early morning until now, without resting even for a moment.'

8 Then Bo'az said to Ruth, 'Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my maidens. <sup>9</sup> Let your eyes be upon the field which they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to molest you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn.' <sup>10</sup> Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, 'Why have I found favour in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, when I am a foreigner?' <sup>11</sup> But Bo'az answered her, 'All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. <sup>12</sup> The LORD recompense you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!

be to read *mē'ôr hab-bôker*, 'from morning light'; cf. LXX 'from morning until evening' and Vulgate 'from morning until now', followed by RSV.

**without resting even for a moment:** so RSV after LXX, reading *w'lô' šāḥ'ā m'āṭ* for M.T. *zeh šibtāh hab-bayit m'āṭ*; cf. Vulgate 'and she has not returned home (even) for a little', reading *w'lô' šāḥāh hab-bayit m'āṭ*, which obviates the exceptional crudity of the Hebrew in the context.

### 8-9

This is the first instance of Boaz' appreciation of the character of Ruth, further disclosed in verse 11, and his fatherly care for her. Though the poor might glean, evidently they might be churlishly handled, the more so that being reduced to gleaning betokened their defenceless state. Ruth is invited to glean for the whole harvest, and even admitted to drink the water which was reserved for the workers, a precious commodity in the East.

**10. she fell on her face, bowing to the ground:** a gesture of respect, not of worship as Staples claims in support of his thesis of the mythological motif in the book.

**a foreigner:** (Hebrew *nokri*), lit. recognized, i.e. conspicuous.

**12. recompense:** 'pay in full'.

**under whose wings you have come to take refuge:** though 'wings' is a possible translation, 'skirts' is better, an anthropomorphism which reflects the spreading of the skirts of one's mantle over a person as a guarantee of protection and, in the case of an unattached female, of marriage (so 3.9); cf. the covering of the bride's head

<sup>13</sup> Then she said, 'You are most gracious to me, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not one of your maidservants.'

<sup>14</sup> And at mealtime Bo'az said to her, 'Come here, and eat some bread, and dip your morsel in the wine.' So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her parched grain; and she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. <sup>15</sup> When she rose to glean, Bo'az instructed his young men, saying, 'Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. <sup>16</sup> And also pull out some from the bundles for her, and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.'

<sup>17</sup> So she gleaned in the field until evening; then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. <sup>18</sup> And she took it up and went into the city; she showed her mother-in-law

with part of the husband's clothing as a marriage rite in certain Arab communities. A closer analogy is of a kinsman putting part of his garment over a widow, attested by J. Lewy (*RHR CX*, 1934, pp. 31ff.).

**13. spoken kindly to:** lit. 'spoken upon the heart of . . .', i.e. 'comforted', a synonym of the verb *niḥam* (so also in Isa. 40.1-2).

**your maidservant . . . my lord:** conventional terms of respectful address for 'I' and 'you'.

**14.** Another mark of the simple kindness of Boaz was the invitation to join the workers at their meal. Vinegar (*hōmes RSV wine*) was the by-product of wine-making, not always intentional. It was an effective thirst-quencher and relish. Parched corn (*kālī*, here barley), was roasted on an iron plate, like that brought by Abigail (1 Sam. 25.18) and Barzillai (2 Sam. 17.28) to David and his men as field rations.

**15. even among the sheaves:** better 'bundles' (see on verse 7).

**16. bundles:** better 'handfuls' (see on verse 7).

**do not rebuke her:** Jewish custom, though admitting rights of gleaning, was somewhat punctilious, allowing the gleaners only what fell by chance and not what fell when the reaper's hand was pricked by a thorn or stung by a scorpion (Mishnah, *Peah*, IV, 10).

**17. beat out:** (Hebrew *wattāḥbōt*). Small quantities of corn were beaten out with a curved stick (Arabic *maḥḥaḥ*) (see on Jg. 6.11). Verse 18 indicates that Ruth beat the corn out outside the town, probably on the threshing-floor.

**an ephah:** this measure of capacity, an Egyptian loanword, was c.  $\frac{5}{8}$  of an imperial bushel and  $\frac{1}{10}$  of a homer ('ass-load'); cf. R. B. Y. Scott, *Peake's Commentary*, 1962, §341.

**18. she showed her mother-in-law . . .:** so RSV correctly, with emendation of the vowels of the verb in M.T., which means 'her mother-in-law saw'.



what she had gleaned, and she also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied.<sup>19</sup> And her mother-in-law said to her, 'Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you.' So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, 'The man's name with whom I worked today is Bo'az.'<sup>20</sup> And Na'omi said to her daughter-in-law, 'Blessed be he by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!' Na'omi also said to her, 'The man is a relative of ours, one of our nearest kin.'<sup>21</sup> And Ruth the Moabitess said, 'Besides, he said to me, "You shall keep close by my servants, till they have finished all my harvest."'<sup>22</sup> And Na'omi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, 'It is well my daughter, that you go out with his maidens, lest in another field you be molested.'<sup>23</sup> So she kept close to the maidens of Bo'az, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests; and she lived with her mother-in-law.

**3** Then Na'omi her mother-in-law said to her, 'My daughter, should I not seek a home for you, that it may be well with you?  
<sup>a</sup> Now is not Bo'az our kinsman, with whose maidens you were?

**she also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied:** this probably denotes the parched corn (cf. verse 14).

**20. Naomi's blessing,** in mentioning God's 'loyalty' (*RSV* **kindness**) to the dead, anticipates the redemption by Boaz, who, if not himself the nearest kinsman, was at least sufficiently well disposed and influential to see that the kinsman's duty of redemption should be fulfilled.

**21. all my harvest:** this included the wheat harvest, about a month later than the barley harvest, which ended conventionally at the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), seven weeks after the inauguration of the barley harvest at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (cf. 1.22).

**22. lest . . . you be molested:** the verb (*pāḡa'*) means 'to meet, or accost', and denotes the uncertainties and hazards to which a defenceless female like Ruth might be exposed.

NAOMI PROVIDES FOR RUTH AND FOR THE HOUSE OF HER DEAD HUSBAND BY CONTRIVING A LEVIRATE MARRIAGE 3.1-18

**1. a home:** see on 1.9. As Naomi wished for her daughters-in-law, so now she contrives for Ruth.

See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. <sup>3</sup> Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. <sup>4</sup> But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do.' <sup>5</sup> And she replied, 'All that you say I will do.'

6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her

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**2. is not Boaz our kinsman?:** lit. 'our acquaintance', more general than *gô'el*, on whom the duties of rehabilitation specifically devolved.

**he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor:** lit. 'he is winnowing the threshing-floor of barley', i.e. the barley which has been threshed on the threshing-floor. The threshing-floor (Hebrew *gören*), lit. the space 'rubbed clear' as the Arabic cognate indicates, was an open space on rock or hard-beaten earth clear of the village (cf. 2.17f.). It was not the most exposed place, but was still open to the breeze, which is necessary for cleaning out the straw and chaff from the grain, the whole being tossed up with a flat-pronged wooden fork. The grain is finally sieved. The operation, which exploits the prevailing south-west wind in Palestine, is done by preference when the wind is steady but not boisterous in the evening and early morning.

**4. uncover his feet:** lit. 'the place of his legs', a euphemism for sexual parts (cf. Exod. 4.25; Isa. 6.2). This word, like 'lie down', which has often a sexual sense, poses the problem of what actually happened on the threshing-floor. H. G. May (*JRAS*, 1939, pp. 75ff.) and Staples (op. cit., pp. 153ff.) boldly declare that this was an instance of sacred prostitution at the high place at Bethlehem, the six omers of barley being the hire of the sacred prostitute (cf. Hos. 2.5, 9.1). In this case the precaution for Ruth's unobtrusive return (verse 14) and the fundamental question of the levirate marriage is meaningless. We do not deny the sexual innuendo, but that may simply be a refinement of the motif in the Tamar story (Gen. 38), which from this point onwards is the prototype for Ruth. The lying under the skirt had probably a conventional significance of consent to marry. The situation was of course a compromising one, and emphasizes the determination of Naomi and the self-effacing sacrifice of Ruth. The situation, with its equivocal language, admirably sustains suspense at the crisis of the story. Arab peasants still sleep by the corn on the threshing-floor, usually in tents or light shelters, as a precaution against theft. Boaz takes the same precaution and is incidentally there to see that work begins betimes with the early-morning breeze.

**6. went down to the threshing floor:** this threshing-floor at Bethlehem was obviously lower than the village, which, like most Palestinian villages, occupied the hill-top.

mother-in-law had told her. <sup>7</sup>And when Bo'az had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and lay down. <sup>8</sup>At midnight the man was startled, and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! <sup>9</sup>He said, 'Who are you?' And she answered, 'I am Ruth, your maidservant; spread your skirt over your maidservant, for you are next of kin.' <sup>10</sup>And he said, 'May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter; you have made this last kindness greater than the first, in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. <sup>11</sup>And now, my daughter, do not fear, I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of worth. <sup>12</sup>And now it is true that I am a near kinsman, yet

**7. his heart was merry:** cf. Jg. 19.6. This may indicate, though it need not, excess. All that may be meant, however, may be that he was well satisfied.  
**at the end of the heap:** the cognate of *'arēmāh* is still used in Arabic for a heap of grain on the threshing-floor.

**softly:** actually 'secretly'.

**8. turned over:** the Arabic cognate indicates that this meant that Boaz turned over rather than 'he bent forward'. In consequence he discovered Ruth lying beside him and not at his feet (see on verse 4).

**9. spread your skirt over your maidservant:** see on 2.12. This was a gesture of protection, as indicated in Ruth's appeal to her kinsman (*gō'el*) with especial reference to marriage (cf. Dt. 22.30 (M.T. 23.1); Ezek. 16.8). The *gō'el* is specifically that kinsman on whom lies the obligation of redemption or levirate marriage, as in the sequel, or of blood-revenge (*gō'el had-dām*) (see on Jos. 20.3). Figuratively the word is applied to God in the sense of rehabilitator, implied in redemption of property and levirate marriage and generally in rehabilitation of status, e.g. from slavery (Isa. 43.1, 44.22, 23, 48.20, 52.9, 63.9; Ps. 107.2, etc.).

**10. you have made this last kindness greater than the first:** Ruth, having given further demonstration of her loyalty to Naomi and her late husband in claiming the right of levirate marriage like Tamar in Genesis 38, had indicated in seeking out Boaz that this was her motive rather than fancy or fortune in seeking to attract young men. Boaz, no longer young, may have been flattered by Ruth's trust.

**11. all my fellow townsmen:** lit. 'the whole gate of my people'. 'Gate' may be used for 'city' by synecdoche, here with particular reference to the gate as the place of business and gossip.

**a woman of worth:** i.e. of strength and character.

**12. Boaz admits not only his consanguinity, but also his kinsman's duty, though**

there is a kinsman nearer than I. <sup>13</sup> Remain this night, and in the morning, if he will do the part of the next of kin for you, well; let him do it; but if he is not willing to do the part of the next of kin for you, then, as the LORD lives, I will do the part of the next of kin for you. Lie down until the morning.'

14 So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another; and he said, 'Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.'<sup>15</sup> And he said, 'Bring the mantle you are wearing and hold it out.' So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley, and laid it upon her; then she went into the city. <sup>16</sup> And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, 'How did you fare, my daughter?' Then she told her all that the man had done for her, <sup>17</sup> saying, 'These six measures of barley he gave to me, for

he declares that there is one who has a prior obligation, and, if he cares to exercise it, a prior claim. This claim is often jealously guarded by first cousins in marriage among the Arabs. This declaration surely absolves Boaz from improper relations with Ruth since, if the other kinsman had accepted, his own good name and hers among his own kin would have been irrevocably damaged and perhaps their lives forfeited.

**13. Remain this night**, since she might have been taken for a public prostitute (cf. Ca. 5.7), and would possibly encounter unprincipled persons, either thieves watching for an opportunity at the threshing-floors or men drunk at that season of harvest.

**14. before one could recognize another**: a woman stirring in the early morning would attract less suspicion, since work, until lately, began before light in Arab villages. The first task of the day being grinding, Ruth, with her load of barley, would be a natural figure.

**15. the mantle**: lit. 'what is spread out' (cf. Isa. 3.22), perhaps the large white kerchief of the fellahin women among the Arabs, which can be drawn over the face or held in the teeth as a partial veil (so *AV*).

**six measures of barley**: the actual measure is unspecified. It cannot be more than an ephah and is probably the omer, which was  $\frac{1}{10}$  of an ephah.

**16. How did you fare, my daughter?**: lit. 'Who are you, my daughter?' If literally meant, this might be designed by Naomi, in the event of the woman not being Ruth, to conceal the fact of Ruth's absence. But, as in the Rās Shamra texts, the interrogative pronoun may mean 'in what condition?', i.e. 'How have you fared?'; cf. *b'l mt . . . my hmlt 'atr b'l*, 'Baal is dead . . . What of the multitudes, the followers of Baal?'

he said, "You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law." <sup>18</sup> She replied, 'Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today.'

**4** And Bo'az went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the next of kin, of whom Bo'az had spoken, came by. So Bo'az said, 'Turn aside, friend; sit down here'; and he turned aside and sat down. <sup>2</sup> And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, 'Sit down here'; so they sat down. <sup>3</sup> Then he said to the next of kin, 'Na'omi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land which belonged to our kinsman Elim'elech. <sup>4</sup> So I thought I would tell you of it, and say, Buy it in the presence of those sitting here, and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not, tell me, that I

**18. rest:** lit. 'be silent'.

#### BOAZ DISCHARGES THE KINSMAN'S DUTIES 4.1-17a

**1. the gate:** see on 3.11. The gate, as well as being the natural place of business, frequented by elderly men of leisure, like 'the elders' (verse 2), who were available as witnesses, was the obvious place to intercept the kinsman on his way to work in the fields.

**friend:** (Hebrew *p'lônî 'almônî*). The narrator has no particular interest in preserving the name, if indeed he was recording a historical fact at all. In such a case, or through haste, an Arab will address one as *ya fulāni* or *shu 'smuk* ('What's-your-name?').

**2. elders of the city:** the heads and representatives of the leading families, who are visualized as judges in domestic cases in Dt. 21.2ff. and 18ff., 22.15-16, etc.

**3. is selling:** actually, in M.T., 'has sold'; but cf. verse 9, where Boaz buys the land from Naomi. The verb may mean 'has offered for sale', the nearest kinsman having the first chance of buying the land from Naomi, but it should probably be taken, as in RSV, as a participle.

**the parcel of land:** it was possibly not a question of privately owned land, but of the share of the family of Naomi's husband in land communally held by the clan and annually allocated by lot for cultivation by individuals (see on 2.3).

**4. I would tell you of it:** lit. 'uncover your ear', i.e. drawing back the long hair.



may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you.' And he said, 'I will redeem it.' <sup>5</sup> Then Bo'az said, 'The day you buy the field from the hand of Na'omi, you are also buying Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to restore the name of the dead to his inheritance.' <sup>6</sup> Then the next of kin said, 'I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it.'

7 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. <sup>8</sup> So when the next of kin said to Bo'az, 'Buy it for

**if you will not** (redeem it): what precedes and follows indicates that this is the correct reading, though the M.T. has 'if he will not (redeem it)'.

**5. you are also buying Ruth:** so RSV after the Vulgate, omitting *m* before the particle 'et, which introduces 'Ruth' in the accusative. This assumes a scribal error of dittography, *m* having a similar form to the preceding *w* ('and') in the proto-Hebraic script. Boaz, who had already appreciated the sterling qualities of Ruth and her personal charm, and was apparently eager to marry her, must conceal his real purpose and allay gossip, which had possibly been fostered by his favour to Ruth during harvest. So he first introduced the subject of the redemption of the land. The nearer kinsman was willing to acquire such a personal asset, but when Boaz introduced the obligation of the levirate marriage which that involved, the matter was too complicated. The land in that case would not be the personal asset of the kinsman or his family, but would be the property of his issue by Ruth, who would rank as the family of her dead husband. This is made more explicit in the statement '**you are also buying Ruth . . . the widow of the dead, in order to restore the name of the dead to his inheritance**'. This principle is ignored in the genealogy in verses 18-22, which indicates that it is a late addition. In buying property which would be no asset to himself or his heirs, perhaps even reducing his own capital to develop his own land, the kinsman might well 'impair his own inheritance'.

**to restore:** lit. 'to cause to stand', i.e. not allow to fall, or lapse.

**the name:** the realization of the person (see on Jos. 7.9).

6. To the kinsman's decline to redeem the family of the dead the Syriac version adds 'through lack of faith'. This, visualizing the Davidic genealogy in verse 17b and verses 18-22, and probably also the genealogy of Jesus, is a Christian gloss.

7. The reference to the rite of the shoe as a custom in former times indicates a comparatively late date of the book, especially as it is extended from redemption (cf. Dt. 25.9) to ordinary exchange or conveyance of property (see Introduction to Ruth, p. 339). A. R. S. Kennedy compares the rite to the convention of *sasine*

yourself,' he drew off his sandal. <sup>9</sup> Then Bo'az said to the elders and all the people, 'You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Na'omi all that belonged to Elim'elech and all that belonged to Chil'ion and to Mahlon. <sup>10</sup> Also Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his native place; you are witnesses this day.' <sup>11</sup> Then all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, 'We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you prosper

in Scots law, the handing over of a piece of turf in conveyance of property. But, as Rowley notes, the rite related strictly to the renunciation of a kinsman's obligation and rights, which is indicated in the accompanying rite in Dt. 25.9, where the widow spits in the face of the kinsman who has renounced his duty. The attestation is not general, but relates specifically to the case of the renunciation of the duty of redemption, and apparently, probably secondarily, to conveyance of property, with the same significance of renunciation of claim. *Per contra*, the setting of the shoe upon land, symbolized possession in legal practice at Nuzu (E. R. Lachemann, *JBL* LVI, 1937, pp. 53ff.) (cf. Ps. 60.8 (M.T. 10)).

II. We should expect the elders only to declare that they were witnesses of the transaction. If the M.T. is not a case of free composition, the writer may have intended to convey the unanimity of the response, the whole transaction in the gate being public. Their cordiality is expressed in the double blessing on Ruth, for whom a patriarchal blessing is wished, and for Boaz. The rhythm of the former blessing becomes the parallelism of poetry in the latter. The reference to Leah and Rachel as the mothers of Israel is particularly appropriate in the case of Ruth, through whom the family of Elimelech was to be rehabilitated. The tradition of Rachel was particularly associated with Bethlehem, her tomb being traditionally situated by Bethlehem (Gen. 35.19-20); cf. the Arab shrine in the northern outskirts of Bethlehem and the site Rāmat Rāḥēl on the highest point between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

**prosper:** (Hebrew <sup>a</sup>*šēh ḥayil*), probably correctly so taken in the pregnant material sense by RSV.

**be renowned:** lit. 'call a name', M.T. *ḵēra' šēm*, which may be a corruption either of *niḵra' šēm* ('let renown be proclaimed'), an optative perfect, which is more common in Arabic, or *ḵēnēh šēm* ('obtain renown').

**Ephrathah** was probably the clan of Boaz. It is associated with Bethlehem in Micah 5.2; Gen. 35.16 and 19, 48.7 (see on 1.2).

in Eph'rathah and be renowned in Bethlehem; <sup>12</sup> and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah because of the children that the LORD will give you by this young woman.'

13 So Bo'az took Ruth and she became his wife; and he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. <sup>14</sup> Then the women said to Na'omi, 'Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without next of kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel! <sup>15</sup> He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him.' <sup>16</sup> Then Na'omi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse. <sup>17</sup> And the women

12. On the local significance of the blessing, cf. the story of the birth of Perez in Genesis 38, which so strikingly recalls the story of Ruth. In the blessing of the family of Boaz by Ruth the narrator seems momentarily to have lost sight of the fact that by the convention of levirate marriage the first offspring of the union would be reckoned to Ruth's deceased husband and not to Boaz. Here, however, the conception of the solidarity of the clan probably associated Boaz with his deceased kinsman, both of whom were of the clan of Perez. Furthermore the line of Boaz would be doubly secure by his issue by Ruth and by his previous children, which he probably had. In any case it must be remembered that this was a personal blessing to Boaz in appreciation of his magnanimity.

14. The women are here again introduced, like the chorus in a Greek drama, heralding Naomi's hope as they had heralded her destitution in 1.19.

**next of kin:** i.e. the son of Ruth, the following blessing referring primarily to his perpetuating the name of the defunct in Israel, but being also an invocation for renown, as in verse 11. The allusion is, of course, to the rights and duties of the vindication of the family of Naomi's deceased husband and sons.

15. **seven sons:** the conventional 'seven' of folklore and saga; cf. 1 Sam. 2.5, 'The barren has borne seven'.

**has borne him:** the language suggests the formula of the adoption of the king as the son of God in Ps. 2.7 and Isa. 9.6 (M.T. 5).

16. **laid him in her bosom:** this was perhaps a gesture of adoption; cf. 'a son has been born to Naomi' (verse 17a); cf. also Sarah, who bore a son by proxy to Abraham through Hagar (Gen. 16), a convention well attested in Mesopotamian and Hurrian law in the second millennium B.C.

17. We should expect the name to have some relation to the declaration 'there is a son born to Naomi', which 'Obed' has not. On Eissfeldt's form-critical argument and on our view that the genealogy in verse 17b is secondary, inspired by the

of the neighbourhood gave him a name, saying, 'A son has been born to Na'omi.' They named him Obed; he was the father of Jesse the father of David.

18 Now these are the descendants of Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron,<sup>19</sup> Hezron of Ram, Ram of Ammin'adab,<sup>20</sup> Ammin'adab of Nahshon, Nahshon of Salmon,<sup>21</sup> Salmon of Bo'az, Bo'az of Obed,<sup>22</sup> Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of David.

redactional genealogy in verses 18-22, which is based on 1 Chr. 2.4-15, see Introduction, pp. 404f.

With the naming of the son of Ruth, probably Ben-Naomi or the like, the story reached its culmination.

#### GENEALOGICAL APPENDIX verses 18-22

This is inspired by the mention of the house of Perez in the blessing on Boaz in verse 12. It is later than the main narrative, and introduced by the formula, common in P and Chronicles, 'These are the generations . . . '.

**18. Perez:** apparently Perez was the ancestor of the clan of Boaz and of the husband of Naomi and probably the ancestor of most of the community of Bethlehem. He was the son of Judah by Tamar (Gen. 38.29, 46.12).

**Hezron:** a son or clan of Perez (Gen. 46.12; Num. 26.21; 1 Chr. 2.5); cf. 1 Chr. 4.1, where he is given as a son of Judah. As Num. 26.21 indicates, this is tribal genealogy, which is still reckoned according to actual or putative ancestors of families among the Arabs.

**19. Ram:** the grandson apparently of Hezron in 1 Chr. 2.25; cf. 1 Chr. 2.9, where Ram is given as apparently the son of Judah. This seeming contradiction is explicable when it is recognized that this is actually tribal genealogy. In Lk. 3.33 Ram (so in Mt. 1.3) is given as Arni, after LXX on Ru. 4.19 (*Arran*).

**20. Amminadab:** the son of Ram (1 Chr. 2.10).

**Nahshon:** the son of Amminadab (1 Chr. 2.10; also perhaps Num. 1.7, 2.3, 10.14).

**Salmon:** cf. Salma the son of Nahshon and father of Boaz (1 Chr. 2.11; cf. 54, where he is connected with Bethlehem). Christian apologetic makes the interesting introduction of Rahab into the Messianic genealogy as the wife of Salmon and mother of Boaz, Rahab in Christian thought being symbolic of faith as 'the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' (Heb. 11.31), an interpretation of the Old Testament which is apparent in the addendum to Ru. 4.6 in the Syriac version that the kinsman refused to take Ruth 'through lack of faith'.

# THE SETTLEMENT OF ISRAEL

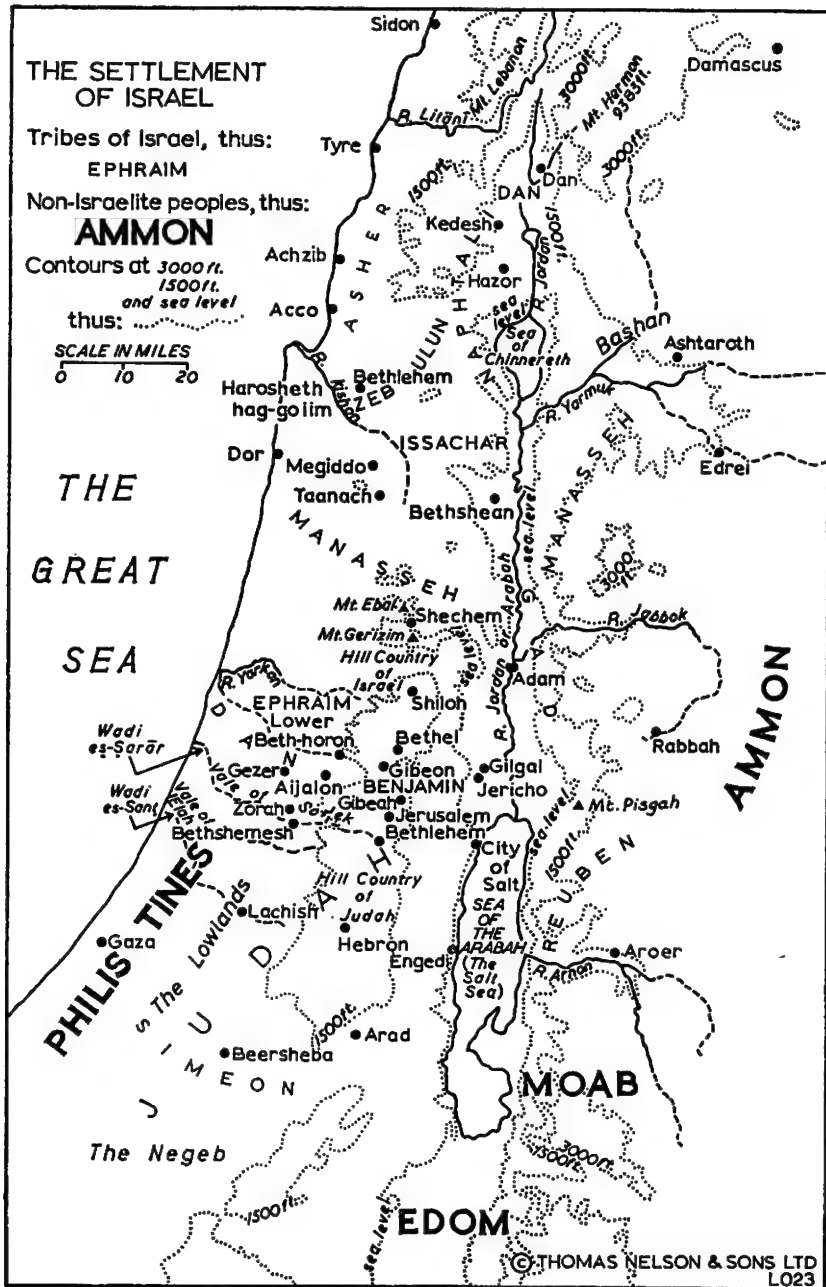
Tribes of Israel, thus:  
EPHRAIM

Non-Israelite peoples, thus:  
**AMMON**

Contours at 3000 ft.  
1500 ft.  
and sea level  
thus:

SCALE IN MILES  
0 10 20

THE  
GREAT  
SEA





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